Student Activism in Asia

Between Protest and Powerlessness

Meredith L. Weiss & Edward Aspinall, Editors

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ACTIVISM IN ASIA

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Meredith L. Weiss

Edward Aspinall

ABBREVIATIONS

ABFSU	All Burma Federation of Students Union
ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
ABL	Anti-British League
ABSU	All Burma Students Union
ANU	Australian National University
APISA	Asian Political and International Studies Association
ARATS	Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits
BBMN	Badan Bertindak Mahasiswa Negara (National Students' Action Front)
Beida	Beijing University
BEM	Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (Student Executive Body)
BN	Barisan Nasional
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDO	City District Officer
CGMI	Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Movement Concentration)
CPK	Communist Party of Korea
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
DAB	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong
DEMA	Gerakan Demokratik Belia dan Pelajar Malaysia (Malaysia Youth and Students Democratic Movement)
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
DYMS	Democratic Youth Movements

FFT	Farmers' Federation of Thailand
FQS	First Quarter Storm
GEMPAR	Gabungan Pelajar Malaysia Anti Perang (Malaysian Students' Anti-War Coalition)
GMKI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Student Movement)
GMNI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Student Movement)
GPMS	Gabungan Pelajar-Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (Peninsular Malay Students' Union)
HKFS	Hong Kong Federation of Students
HKJA	Hong Kong Journalists Association
HKU	Hong Kong University
HKUSU	Hong Kong University Students' Union
HKYTSA	Hong Kong Youth and Tertiary Students Association
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Islamic Students' Association)
ICAC	Independent Commission against Corruption
INSAN	Institute for Social Analysis
ISA	Internal Security Act
ITB	Institut Teknologi Bandung (Bandung Institute of Technology)
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
KADENA	Kabataan para sa Demokrasya at Nasyonalismo (Youth for Democracy and Nationalism)
KAMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Action Front)
KCIA	Korean Central Intelligence Agency
KM	Kabataang Makabayan (Nationalist Youth)
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Union)
KMP	Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines)
KMT	Kuomintang
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement)
KNCC	Korean National Council of Churches
KNPI	Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (National Committee of Indonesian Youths)
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LEGCO	Legislative Council

MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MDU	Malayan Democratic Union
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDP	New Democratic Party
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NL	National Liberation
NLD	National League for Democracy
NLFS	National League of Filipino Students (later the group became known as LFS)
NPA	New People's Army
NSCT	National Student Center of Thailand
NTU	National Taiwan University
NUS	National University of Singapore
OMELCO	Office of Members of the Legislative and Executive Council
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam seMalaysia (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party)
PBMUM	Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya (University of Malaya Malay Language Society)
PD	People's Democracy
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKN/PKR	Parti Keadilan Nasional/Parti Keadilan Rakyat (National/People's Justice Party)
PKP	Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines)
PKPIM	Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (National Association of Malaysian Muslim Students)
PKPM	Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-Pelajar Malaysia (National Union of Malaysian Students)
PMI	Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Students' Society)
PMKRI	Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia (Catholic Student Association of the Republic of Indonesia)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RIT	Rangoon Institute of Technology
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
ROK	Republic of Korea

SDK	Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan (Association of the Democratic Youth)
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
STOVIA	School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen (School for Training Native Doctors)
TOBS	task-oriented bastards
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)
UM	University of Malaya
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMSU	University of Malaya Student Union
UP	University of the Philippines
UPM	Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Agriculture University of Malaysia)
USC	University Socialist Club
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia (Science University of Malaysia)
UST	University of Science and Technology
UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (University of Technology Malaysia)
UUCA	University and University Colleges Act

INTRODUCTION

Understanding Student Activism in Asia

MEREDITH L. WEISS, EDWARD ASPINALL, AND MARK R. THOMPSON

The frequency with which students have been at the forefront of opposition movements in Northeast and Southeast Asia has captivated global audiences again and again, from the image of Chinese students fighting for freedom in Tiananmen Square in 1989, to that of their Indonesian peers celebrating their role in toppling the Soeharto dictatorship a decade later. Examples abound: South Korean students' fighting running street battles against military dictatorship in the 1980s, the Burmese student-led protests so brutally repressed in 1988, and more. These dramatic events echo headlines of an earlier era, from the great student demonstrations in China and South Korea of 1919, to students' new left-inspired protests of the 1960s and early 1970s in Japan and elsewhere, to their struggles against the developmentalist dictatorships that came to dominate the region in the 1970s and 1980s. And frequently, students have not been mere participants, but at the vanguard of the social movements behind these waves of protest.

Student activism is so commonplace that it seems to require no explanation. Students' mobilization has long been a prominent feature of movements for political reform around the world. Nonetheless, the reasons for, shape of, and impact of that engagement vary dramatically—and the fact that only a minority of students ever participate in political activism is testament to how contingent such engagement is. Despite the continuing visibility of student protest, relatively little theoretical or comparative research has explored the determinants and impacts of student activism. A surge of scholarly interest tracked the worldwide wave of student radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s, yet even then, few studies ventured beyond the specifics of a particular place and time. Even the pivotal

roles of student activists in movements for political change in the 1980s and 1990s failed seriously to reignite academic interest in such fundamental and obvious questions as *why* students protest, why they protest *as* students, and what sort of commonalities or organic linkages one finds *across* student bodies. These questions are this volume's starting point.

This volume seeks to reopen the topic of students' political activism by exploring it in the "natural laboratory" of Northeast and Southeast Asia, site of some of the most dramatic examples of student protest in contemporary history, but also of unusually stark variations in student organization and activism, both across states and within states over time. The authors and editors define *student activism* for the purposes of this project as *collective action by university students directed toward (and often against) the ruling regime*. Our interest is in the political implications of their mobilization. Moreover, even though in some cases—prewar China or Malaya, for instance—secondary students play significant independent or supplementary roles, the university and its students occupy a distinctive sociopolitical space and so merit specific analysis. In terms of temporal and geographic scope, this volume considers the full post–World War II period—from the 1940s through the present—across Northeast and Southeast Asia (albeit with at least cursory reference to earlier activism in certain cases). Pooling the expertise of country specialists, we look across time and space to develop a process-driven analysis that moves beyond nostalgia and retrospective to offer explanatory factors applicable also in other regions.

However culturally diverse, we may define the Northeast and Southeast Asian region in economic terms, in ways that lend analytical leverage. Economies within the region are connected through production cycles as well as capital flows, creating mutual dependencies (Cumings 1987). This economic intertwining is likely to shape political priorities and structures. In nearly all states of the region, developmental imperatives have encouraged political closure in the second half of the twentieth century: bolstered by a cold war ideological context, autocratic leaders declared political participation an unaffordable luxury. Developmentalism as a state ideology entails cooperation between civil or military powerholders and technocrats to implement an export-driven growth strategy to win popular support, driven by performance-based criteria, for nondemocratic rule; the form found in this region is overwhelmingly hard or soft developmental authoritarianism. State elites reified technocratic efficiency, suppressed organized labor, rendered big business dependent on

or fused with the state, and co-opted middle-class professionals, leaving civil society enervated; to do so, these regimes developed strong institutions, insulated from popular pressures (though in many cases, not from various forms of corruption), and relied on performance-based rather than democratic legitimacy (Hewison and Rodan 1996; Deyo 1987; Vennewald 1994). Students have often been the first, if not the only, force to step into the resultant vacuum. Building on that history, they have just as often been prominent actors in the wave of democratization, too, that many states in the region began to experience from the 1980s onward.

Where Asian students have engaged politically, their activism has run the gamut from being tentative to being radically transgressive, being autonomous to being manipulated, and targeting everything from the provincial government to the central state. For instance, students were central to Indonesia's national-level Reformasi movement of 1998 but relatively marginal to the movement of the same name and in the same year in Malaysia, despite the latter country's less repressive regime. A more glaring contrast is between Burma or South Korea and Singapore; students were central to the democracy uprisings of the late 1980s in the former two states and remained among the most potent sources of opposition to the authoritarian regimes in both, working in alliance with other political forces. In contrast, students have been quiescent in semiauthoritarian Singapore. Even in the tumultuous events in the Philippines between the late 1960s and late 1980s, students rarely took the lead in antigovernment political activities and mobilizations, including in the famous People Power events of 1986 (but they did play a leading role in the ouster of President Joseph Estrada in People Power II in 2001). We note stark contrasts when we look at trends over time, too: in Japan, the militant leftist Zengakuren rocked politics of the 1960s, and in China, students dramatically took the lead in antigovernment protests in 1989. In the 1990s and 2000s, campuses in both countries have been largely sedate.

Moreover, student movements in any one country interact and intermesh with counterpart movements in other states. Flows among students themselves, flows of literatures informing activism, and flows across patterns and stages of political and economic development drive this engagement. Even after the decline of the great cold war–era international student unions (e.g., Altbach 1970 or Stern 1967), one per bloc, student activists have traveled to visit, have liaised with, and have been inspired by their counterparts across national boundaries. Studies of student protest tend to be far more narrowly circumscribed than the

movements themselves. Part of what the current study investigates is the extent to which such flows and mutual awareness have been instrumental to agitation in any one state.

The present volume aims to disentangle causative factors prompting particular forms of student mobilization. It also examines how social movements made up of students differ from others, and the effects of regime conditions—from guiding ideologies and economic priorities, to changes in the space available for civil society, to the likelihood of violent coercion—on the nature of students' (dis)engagement. A structured comparison of functionally interrelated countries with a range of political systems, income levels, educational frameworks, and experiences of student activism, viewed over a span of time, allows us to isolate factors that give rise to student movements and conditions under which they may have a substantial political impact. Important for such an investigation are higher education policies, the structure of civil society and political regimes, and transnational connections. These dimensions represent the four "stories" each of our chapters tells, on education systems, collective identity, regimes, and international diffusion. Always in the background is the empirical reality of student mobilization: such engagement is pervasive across time and place in Northeast and Southeast Asia, looms very large in processes of political change, and appears unusually resilient in the face of state repression.

This chapter begins the volume with the punch line in the form of a set of comparative conclusions, drawn from the more detailed case studies that follow. Recognizing the enormous breadth of the issues we engage here, we have chosen a collaborative approach. We developed these findings over the course of two workshops, bringing together leading scholars on student movements in each of the countries included, and focused throughout on four guiding questions. This framework allows for structured, focused comparative analysis, and for middle-range theory developed out of thick description and deep, cross-national expertise. Our picture overall is one of a close, but clearly not necessary, sufficient, or consistent connection between university student status and political awareness and involvement. The learning processes that inspire and shape this connection occur within the campus, among clusters of students, and across national boundaries, shifting in form and focus with transformations in regime type and economic orientation—even as the trope and category of "student activism" retains an essential continuity. We broach this investigation first by examining student movements as a

form of political contention, before proceeding to the analytical questions guiding the volume and a set of tentative answers to them derived from the case studies that follow.

Toward an Explanation of Student Movements

However distinctive in their membership and organization, student movements are fundamentally a form of social movement. Mobilization of students *as* students is hardly automatic. Instead, it begins with solidifying a collective identity defining "students" plausibly in ways extending beyond enrolling in and studying for classes (Snow 2001); to framing contemporary issues in such a way that students feel not merely aggrieved, but inspired to take collective action (Mansbridge and Morris 2001); to forming organizations for recruitment and engagement (McAdam and Scott 2005); to selecting among a repertoire of protest strategies (Tilly 1979). As Donald Emmerson (1968, 390) summarizes, students "tend to be politically aware, interested, and active in sharply decreasing degrees." Typically, except in a very few cases of truly momentous mobilization (China in 1989, perhaps, or Indonesia in 1998), only small minorities of students on any one campus engage directly in protest—and the proportion of university students overall involved is never extraordinarily high.[1] Moreover, given the constant turnover among students—their status being inherently temporary—mobilization, as well as organizational maintenance more broadly, must be ongoing processes.

Still, students enjoy concrete advantages among activists, both facilitating mobilization and lending it disproportionate clout. As prior analysts have noted, university (and sometimes secondary school) students are uniquely exposed to "the pull of modern ideas" (Altbach 1982, 174), they are positioned structurally—especially in the context of postcolonial development—among (future) intellectual and occupational elites (Rootes 1980, 475–76; Schubert, Tetzlaff, and Vennewald 1994; Pinner 1972), they are less likely to be harshly repressed than other sectors (Lipset 1967, 6), and they are comparatively free of career and family obligations that might raise the stakes for acting out. Student movements are among few genres of movement defined in part by a biological life cycle; their inherently temporary status encourages a degree of efficiency and creativity in students' mobilization. Indeed, without denying the need to specify how, when, and why students mobilize, we can safely identify a category of "student movements," acknowledged both by the students

who organize them and by generations of those movements' supporters and disparagers alike.[2]

Yet scholars of social movements rarely venture fine distinctions among *types* of social movements. A central premise of the present volume is that student movements merit investigation as a distinct form, given their constituency only among those with a particular institutional standing, presumptions of expertise and authority (based largely or wholly on sociocultural position), physical center in campuses, and flexibility in issue areas (since students are equally unqualified, yet vocal, on a wide range of topics). Whether seen through a mechanisms-based (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001), political process (McAdam 1988), resource-mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977), discursive frame-focused (Benford and Snow 2000), or other lens, student movements look and behave differently from social movements composed of otherwise-defined categories of actors—for instance, trade unions among occupationally organized activists, ideological movements spanning a potential cross-section of citizens, urban or rural movements drawing on geographically structured constituencies, or ethnic or religious movements that build on ascriptive social identities. Many of the strategies most common among student movements reflect their liminal, intellectual, and physically concentrated status, from the occupation of campuses, to targeted marches and rallies, to production of critical texts. Furthermore, as the case studies presented here detail, their characteristics and constituents allow student movements to respond in unusual ways to repression (Boudreau 2004; Davenport et al. 2005). Some have reverted to flexible and untraceable micro-organizations (South Korea or Indonesia in the 1980s–90s), developed more radical underground networks (the Philippines in the 1970s–80s, Japan after the 1960s), sustained mobilizational infrastructure and conscientization in exile (Burma since 1988), or engaged in political jujitsu (Sharp 1973, 657) by parlaying state violence into a reification of students' selflessness and moral purity (China in 1989).

We endeavor in this volume to address both the uniqueness and the ubiquity of student activism by focusing on how the frames and identity categories at its root are enacted, contested, and diffused. Our overarching problematic is what has sparked and sustained student protest long after the nationalist heydays that so often initially inspired it, and amid either the routinization, commercialization, and massification of higher education (in most of our cases) or brutal, intransigent repression (in

the remaining cases). Students' political potency is in part a function of self-identification and mobilization, but these dimensions are tied intrinsically to the shape of higher education, regime dynamics, the scope and nature of the rest of civil society, and socioeconomic development. Perhaps most important and obvious: early in the period under study, university students comprised a small elite. Now they represent a far less exclusive segment: the democratization of higher education may, we propose, have paradoxically muted students' scope for independent voice.

Throughout the region and period, higher education has expanded at a rapid pace. As applied to higher education, massification "reflects the global trend of improving higher education opportunities for all, and transforming higher education systems from being elitist to ensuring mass participation across different social, income, and geographical groups" (Lee and Healy 2006, 3). Driving these trends is a combination of population growth, expansion of secondary education across society,

Table 1.1. Expansion of Higher Education: Gross Enrollment Ratios (Total Enrollment as a Percentage of Relevant Age Cohort)

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
South Korea	7	12	37	78	91
Singapore*	9	12	34	60	
Japan	18	31	29	47	55
Thailand	3	10	17	35	46
Hong Kong	7	10			32
Malaysia		4	7	26	29
Philippines	18	24	25	30	28
China		1	3	8	20
Indonesia	3	4	8	14	17
Brunei		1		13	15
Laos			1	3	8
Burma	2	4	5		
Cambodia	1		1	2	4
Vietnam		3	3	9	
World average	9	12	13	19	24
East Asia and Pacific	3	5	7	15	24

*Data for Singapore are from 1975, 1985, and 1995.

Sources: All cases except Singapore: 2009 Global Education Digest, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, available online at http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=7628_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC (accessed February 17, 2010); Singapore data only: Tan 2006, 162–63 and Mock and Tan 2004, 73.

and increasing affluence; higher education, in contemporary contexts, remains a means both for individual social mobility and for national growth, societal restructuring, and national unity (Lee and Healy 2006, 3). Malaysia, for instance, has seen exponential growth in the number of universities, from just three in 1970 to dozens today; expansion has been especially rapid since liberalization of the education sector in the mid-1990s. Domestic students represent most of this growth, but as elsewhere in the region, state-led development policies over the past decade or so have explicitly targeted expansion in Malaysia's share of the global education market. While precise data on the size of this market are elusive, particularly given difficulties in measurement, the market is worth tens of billions, if not trillions, of hotly contested dollars (Gürüz 2008, 114–15). Clearly, students are hardly peripheral as a segment, political salience aside.

Analytical Framework

Four sets of interconnected questions guide our analysis. First, what is it about university students that gives them such political, and specifically vanguardist, potential? Previous studies have suggested numerous factors, ranging from the historical legitimacy conferred by student participation in independence movements, to the liberating effects of students' access to new ideas, to students' transitional status between childhood and adult responsibilities. For example, early explanations of student activism in Asia and other developing countries often emphasized the sense of social responsibility that students' status as a tiny and privileged elite in predominantly uneducated, peasant societies generated (e.g., Lipset 1967; Lyonette 1966; or later, Kelliher 1993). In intervening decades, rapid economic growth and dramatic social transformation in most of the countries considered here has been accompanied by the rise of mass education. This change has greatly transformed the student experience, yet no comparative studies (with the possible, partial exception of Altbach 1989) have examined the implications for students' political participation or how historical legacies and traditions of student activism get passed along or lost between generations.

Second, what accounts for varying levels of coordination between students and other actors in civil and political society? Or, put differently, under what conditions does the category of "student" become an important political identity such that students organize primarily *as* students?

In some countries of the region, students have jealously guarded their autonomy and campus-based movements have been the norm. In others, students have joined forces with other groups, whether they are social movements, political parties, or ascriptive or occupational groups. Rather than assuming (as much of the earlier generation of scholarship did) that students will normally view themselves primarily as students when it comes to acting collectively, this study aims to view "student" as a problematic collective identity (e.g., per Melucci 1995, 42–44), only productive of student activism under certain circumstances that require explanation.

Third, what are the impacts of regime type, prevailing laws, and regime strategies of co-optation and repression on the scope and nature of student activism? Here this volume seeks to extend the work of scholars who emphasize the ways by which social movements and political oppositions are themselves shaped in fundamental ways by the regimes they seek to change or even overthrow. For example, we examine ways in which student movements discursively challenge or reproduce dominant ideologies, the extent to which students' political activities are influenced by their expectations of professional and career prospects, as well as the ways by which student activists adapt to, work around, or confront regime rules designed to restrict the scope of student and broader civil societal activism. Our inclusion of cases ranging from consolidated democracies such as Japan, to transitional countries such as South Korea and Indonesia, to nondemocratic regimes such as China and Burma, allows us to examine the effect that regime type may have on the nature, scope, and aims of student activism. (For an earlier effort, see Weinberg and Walker 1969.) These cases represent an array of approaches to higher education, as well, for instance in terms of the balance between public and private institutions, or of state decision making on curricula and educational objectives.

Lastly, what accounts for apparent transnational patterns of student protest cycles across this region? While Asia is hardly the only venue in which students have been, and remain, key political actors (see, for instance, Carey 2005 on Mexico; Donahue 1971 on Latin America broadly; or DeGroot 1998 on a range of cases for evidence from other regions), by the 1980s, it had become the most consistent host to evocative, potentially transformative student movements: Burma in 1962 and 1988, China in 1989, and Indonesia in 1998, to list just a few. We suggest that this regional clustering may be more than merely coincidental. Rather, Asian students' primary points of reference, concentration of friends across borders, and overseas study destinations (and not only for reasons of

linguistic facility) are likely to be within the region: student unions from across Southeast Asia participated in regional study tours and networking in the 1950s–60s, for example. At the root of such apparent trends could be the coincidence of economic development, the expansion of mass education, and underlying political changes. But we should not discount the possibility of transnational interaction: the demonstration effects of protest and repression cycles in nearby countries, the diffusion of ideological frameworks and repertoires for contention among student communities, the intervention of transnational student organizations, and institutional linkages among students and states. While the format of this collaborative study allows closer examination than has been done to date on such processes, any conclusions about the mechanisms at play must remain tentative; we can, however, trace patterns across states of cognate protest cycles and generative factors.

Examining student activism from these four perspectives allows us not only to cast new light on the neglected topic of student activism itself but also to contribute to studies of civil society and social movements, higher education policy, and regime change and democratization. We venture preliminary answers to these queries in the discussion that follows.

Students' Specific Potential

Especially at key moments, students represent a form of "strategic group," a loosely structured category formed around shared material or ideal interests—albeit less driven by the urge to advance those interests than theories of strategic groups generally suggest (Evers and Schiel 1988; Evers 1997). Classifying student activists as a distinctive strategic group helps to differentiate them from other social forces. Schubert, Tetzlaff, and Vennewald (1994), for instance, define students as a subgroup of professionals—that is, those who possess the most modern knowledge about society and thus serve as its intelligentsia. Given their knowledge, professionals must cooperate with a regime if it is to survive. Even if we more realistically conceptualize students as professionals in the making, the salience of that status remains. Pinner (1972) takes a somewhat different approach, grouping students with military leaders and certain clergy as marginal elites. Marginal elites are producers of collective goods who are supported by the larger community but live together apart from it, are recruited (or self-nominated) for and formally admitted to that status, enjoy special privileges and immunities, and are

governed by unique rules. Seen through either lens, students occupy a distinct, transitional niche; most importantly, they have expectations connected with their projected futures as adults, often without yet having as many personal and professional responsibilities as those with more permanent status.

At the same time, especially in rapidly modernizing societies (such as most of those examined in the current volume), students are typically part of a developmental enterprise broadly defined. Developmental regimes place great emphasis on the achievement of the technocratic knowledge and skills required to promote rapid economic advancement. This imperative not only generally requires the rapid expansion of higher education, but also that developmental regimes largely define students in terms of the contribution that they will make to nation building and economic growth. Especially in authoritarian regimes, developmental efforts may go hand in hand with attempts by regimes to depoliticize students and to define their role in narrowly technical terms: as Soeharto's Minister for Education Daoed Joesoef put it, students' place was to "fill the technostructure" required to manage the country's economic development (Joesoef 1984, 70). However, such efforts are often unsuccessful. Students acquire technocratic skills and (at least in some cases) study development as a formal and abstract process, at the same time honing skills in critical thinking and independent analysis. This means many students not only absorb the narrow technocratic knowledge that regimes expect them to acquire but also gravitate toward critical theories either as part of their education or as a side effect of it. It is these forms of knowledge appropriation that are often most relevant for understanding students' role as a strategic group.

The technocratic knowledge acquired at university is designed to serve as the basis for a hoped-for professional life and is part of the general goal of education's contribution to development. Students, by contrast, are often concerned with ideas about what not only development but also more fundamentally the society and polity should be like. Their newfound technical knowledge can readily be "instrumentalized" for activist purposes, especially as an ideological critique of the status quo (Seton Watson 1985), as the examples in our volume show repeatedly, although in other cases, it is the humanistically rather than technologically educated that tend to mobilize.

Moreover, because of their (relative) physical isolation and their temporal isolation in a transitional period between childhood and the full

responsibilities of adult life, university students do not, as a matter of course, have institutionalized links with an outside constituency. (Current trends toward distance learning and other nontraditional formats, however, may deeply erode this structural independence.) They are their own constituency, a potentially self-mobilizing strategic group with a largely ideational basis for undertaking political action. Although, as we shall see, student activists often try to overcome this condition by forging alliances with other strategic groups, the modern history of Northeast and Southeast Asia also provides many examples of students mobilizing above all as students and eschewing links with other social and political actors. Students are also typically concentrated geographically in the usually close quarters of a university campus, located in many developing countries in the capital and other large cities. Since these same cities generally dominate politics, students' urban position facilitates their playing lead roles on the political stage. Students thus more often see themselves—and are more likely to be seen—as capable of speaking on behalf of the broader population that lacks access to education and is far removed from the capital city (Altbach 1982, 164–65).

Finally, students are embedded in a multiplicity of organizational structures. They are not just students enrolled at a university. They also are part of a graduating class and may be members of specific student associations (e.g., the League of Filipino Students in the Philippines) that invoke particularly strong identification. The forms and premises of these organizations matter for students' self-awareness, networks, and foci. Extracurricular activities in sports and various clubs form close bonds that can be drawn on in mobilizing for protest, as do the even more informal personal networks that develop when students interact in close quarters in university dormitories and cafeterias. Such links and associations can forge social capital among students, even if these ties are apolitical. Students are almost always allowed an (often officially weak) parallel government in the form of student councils and unions, which may assume great importance at critical junctures. Such organizational resources can readily be turned to mobilizational purposes when other conditions are right.

In summary, geographical concentration and proximity to power, disproportionate influence and perceived elite status, and integration in multiple organizational structures combine with the aforementioned attributes—students' preprofessional status, their limited responsibilities,

their cognizance of the gap between ideals and reality—to make students potentially one of the most highly mobilized groups in society.

The Impact of Rapidly Expanding Higher Education

The arguments sketched so far are not radically different from the conclusions of literature that studied the wave of student protests of the 1960s and early 1970s. However, while these arguments apply to university students of most or all types, as our discussions concluded, we also need to consider carefully how the changing nature of higher education, and students' changing experience of it, may affect students' propensity to protest. Emphasizing fundamental elements of students' social position does help to explain why students often emerge to play a strategic political role, but it can hardly account for rising and falling waves of student protest over time, or the disappearance altogether of students as a powerful political actor in some countries. To begin to comprehend such patterns requires observing more precisely how students' social position and their role as a strategic group are affected by changes in the broader world of higher education, including their socialization into shifting patterns of student life.[3]

Over the last half century, mirroring global trends, the higher education system in every Northeast and Southeast Asian country has undergone dramatic expansion and transformation, both as a part of government policies intended to produce rapid economic development and as a consequence of such development. As of the mid-twentieth century, most countries in the region had a very small number of elite government universities, very often only one or two, typically located in the capital city. For instance, Thailand had five universities through the 1950s, compared with twenty-five public ones now (Bovornsiri 2006, 192), and Singapore, with one private and one public university at independence, now has three public universities as well as one full and eight specialized (i.e., for business or art) private universities (Ministry of Education 2010). Sometimes, for a decade or more after independence, faculty from the former colonial power still played a major role in running these institutions, while a cohort of indigenous academics was gradually trained to take their place. Only a miniscule proportion of the country's youth could aspire to enroll in these elite institutions. As countries tried to expand their higher education in order to boost economic development, they often started with the gradual expansion of teacher

training institutes and the establishment of state universities in provincial capitals. With the onset of rapid economic development, growth of the private university market typically accompanied further expansion of public higher education. Several countries in the region liberalized to allow private universities in the mid-1990s. The growth of smaller, private universities also was encouraged by ambitious lower middle–class families and even some from more humble backgrounds, who tried to achieve upward mobility for their children through educational achievement. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, higher education had become a truly mass commodity in many countries, with participation rates ranging from an estimated over 90 percent of secondary school graduates in South Korea down to 4 percent in Cambodia (see Table 1.1). While South Korea, as a fully developed country, and Cambodia, as one of the poorest in the region, represent extremes, the data in the table demonstrate that higher education has expanded in the "middle range" countries, as well. In such circumstances, higher education is no longer the preserve of a privileged elite, but part of the expected life cycle of a large part of the population, a necessary stage in one's transition to even an ordinary middle-class profession. At the same time, the middle classes, who feed their children through the university system, are much larger, more economically robust, and more politically secure and influential than they were half a century ago.

What influence has this changing shape of higher education had on patterns of student political participation and protest? Although the countries studied in the volume present substantial variation, we can observe three broad phases.

First is an early post–World War II (usually also postcolonial) phase when students are part of a tiny educated elite, frequently closely tied to the country's rulers. In such circumstances, students often develop a sense of heightened social and political mission, which can take both left- and right-wing forms. Frequently, this sense of mission draws upon traditions of student participation in earlier nationalist struggles, with the May Fourth Movement in 1919 in China being a classic example.[4] One factor that may be particularly consequential for student protest at this stage is that precisely because activists include the children of government ministers, army generals, and other senior officials, they have a license to protest that is sometimes not conferred on other groups: governments are reluctant to order troops to fire on student protestors if they

believe that the children of their own senior officials might be among the victims (as was the case in Indonesia in 1966).

Second, comes a period of disruptive massification of higher education: expansion of the sector that is not just dramatic and quick, but difficult for the existing social system to absorb. The early phases of the expansion of higher education often coincide with intense disruption of the broader social system, at times when rapid urbanization and industrialization are taking place and the fast accumulation of wealth and rampant consumerism on display in urban areas are making social inequalities more visible. The effects of the personal dislocation that students may experience as they move from relatively humble social backgrounds into university life can make them acutely aware of the broader social problems and injustices generated by economic development and social modernization. Moreover, often the number of students at colleges and universities expands out of proportion with actual rates of economic growth. Expansion of higher education thus often represents more the *will* to modernize than it reflects actual progress toward modernization. The quality of the facilities and teaching provided often fall far short of students' expectations and their future job prospects may be far from secure. In many of the countries studied in this volume, the figure of the unemployed, or chronically underemployed, university graduate is ubiquitous. Such unmet expectations can be a tremendous source of radicalization and protest among students, as several of the cases detailed here, from Malaysia to China, demonstrate.

Yet in other circumstances, or often at the very same time, progress through the rapidly expanding higher education system becomes a ticket to upward social mobility for growing layers of the lower middle classes and sometimes for the children of rural and poorer urban families. In such conditions, massification of higher education can confer legitimacy benefits for a ruling regime. Writing on Thailand in the 1960s and 1970s, Benedict Anderson (1977, 17) stressed, "The *political* meaning of the proliferation of universities under Sarit and his heirs: as a kind of symbolic confirmation that the boom was not fortune but progress, and that its blessings would be transmitted to the next generation within the family." Overall, the changing social composition of the student body can have important, but highly varied effects on student political mobilization. The expansion of the university system to regional towns and its opening to students from lower middle-class backgrounds can erode the elitism of the early generations of student activism and draw in groups

with more diverse political orientations. Thus in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s, students at smaller, private, and regional universities tended to be more politically radical than those at the traditional elite state universities. An even more striking illustration comes from Malaysia—where the rapid expansion of higher education in the 1970s and the entry into it of large numbers of ethnically Malay students as a result of government positive discrimination policies fundamentally altered the composition of both the student body and its political expressions, with the rise of new waves of Islamist and Malay-nationalist agitation. As a result of these complex processes, the early phases of massification can have highly varied and even contradictory effects on students as political actors.

Third, we may speak of consolidated massification of the higher education system, a stage that is accompanied in many of the countries we study in this volume by increased commercialization of that system. In this period, higher education finally becomes a truly mass commodity—for instance in Korea, Singapore, and Japan, where a clear majority of students now pursue higher education. The transition from disruptive to consolidated massification is rarely clearly demarcated, but is context specific: consolidation is reached when higher education has been broadly normalized. Institutions of higher education proliferate, diversify, and specialize. The growth of a commercial higher education sector is encouraged by most governments to the point that private universities and technical colleges outnumber public ones in most of the countries studied here. Students in private universities, in turn, have to pay very high fees sometimes, financed often by loans, making them less likely to engage in politically risky activity that might jeopardize their academic success. Many of the new higher education institutions also have a narrow focus on technical or professional training rather than the broad liberal arts education that typically encourages critical social theory and action (although public universities have in many cases also lost this focus, at least since our second phase). In some cases (at least, in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, and Japan), universities also compete for international students, adding to the social and hence political fragmentation of the student body and diminishing any likely claim to legitimate voice. Increasing numbers of students, too, engage in paid part-time or even full-time work outside the campus to finance their studies, further diminishing their capacity for political action. (Meanwhile, neoliberal pressures erode alternative identity categories such as "worker" as well.) At the same time, the children of the

ruling elite of the country, as well as of growing sections of the business and middle classes—cognizant of the cheapened status that a domestic university degree confers, and with greater economic resources at their disposal—have increasing options for overseas tertiary education.

The overall effect of such changes is that the status and potential of students as a strategic political group often declines, ironically, precisely as their numbers increase. With higher education's being seen more and more as a routine and expected stage in an ordinary member of society's life arc, rather than as a special privilege conferring special obligations, students are less likely to view themselves as a category of political actor with a vanguard role or a duty to act as moral savior of the nation. Equally, other social groups and ruling elites are less likely to be respectful of or deferential to students' political opinions or their activities. In short, a banalization of students' social status may bring with it delegitimation of their political role. While many individual students are likely to remain engaged in political and social activism, they increasingly do so as part of off-campus social or political movements, rather than merely as students.

Clearly, this periodization is a stylized one, and it is possible to find exceptions and overlaps even just within the sample of countries that make up this volume. As we shall see, other factors have equal, if not more momentous, influence on patterns and forms of student protest in specific contexts. Nevertheless, this periodization provides an important starting point for our analysis. In almost all countries studied, the early postcolonial phase is characterized by significant and influential student activism, often marked by an elitist assumption that students carry a pronounced sense of social mission and duty, including serving as national saviors. The period of disruptive massification is a truly transitional phase when, depending on other factors, students can subside into relative political quiescence, remain active but merge with other social movements, or, especially in conditions of either regime friction or breakdown or exogenous economic shocks, can still take a leading role in antiregime activism, mobilizing qua students (Japan in the 1960s, Thailand in 1973, Indonesia in 1998). But in all the countries that we study that have achieved consolidated massification of the higher education sector, we see a decline of student mobilization, or at least of students' mobilizing primarily as students—even if at an earlier stage (e.g., Korea in the 1980s), growth alone was not sufficient to cause such effects in light of the influence of other factors (in the Korean case, the effects of the regime's authoritarianism

and the struggle to achieve democratization). This finding applies both to countries that have achieved relatively stable and consolidated democracies (Japan, Taiwan, South Korea) and countries where polities retain significant authoritarian features (Malaysia, Singapore).

"Student" as a Political Identity

The fact that students have the capacity for mobilization and even a legacy of past engagement does not mean that they will engage or will do so on grounds of their student status. At the core of this calculus rest questions of collective identity: "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution . . . a perception of a shared status or relation . . . [which] is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity" (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 285). Any collective identity—indeed, any single dimension of identity, collective or otherwise—is necessarily partial. Even setting aside all other dimensions (nationality, gender, etc.), merely being a student presents both a social (or role) identity and a collective identity. The former is an identity grounded in an established social role: a student is one who is enrolled in an educational institution. A collective identity, on the other hand, offers an embedded sense of collective agency and is better understood as a process than as a property of social actors (Snow 2001). Taking this approach, Alberto Melucci (1995, 44) presents collective identity narrowly as "an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place." He elaborates the self-reflexive, constructed, contingent process by which social actors come to recognize themselves as part of a collective, maintain that collective, and see collective action as sensible, a process he dubs *identization* (Melucci 1995; 42, 51). Such a framing clarifies why we cannot presume that students will identify collectively as "students" in any politically meaningful sense, any more than we could presume that a given cluster of students would identify and mobilize politically in terms of state of origin, ethnicity, or sexuality. Their sense of who they are and of how that identity will be read by the public, and the "pleasures and obligations" of collective identity, influence not only student activists' strategic choices, but also whether they choose to identify as such in the first place (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 284).

Drawing attention to the concept of collective identity does not suggest that all persons who have embraced that identity will share the same political ideology or outlook. Rather, it focuses our analysis on how individuals come to self-identify as belonging to a particular category, without regard for the degree of ideological or programmatic unity that category admits. In the case of students, this fungibility means that a given state or campus may support multiple student movements. In particular, both layered over and helping to shape individual identity is organization: whether students join groups exclusive to their ranks or open to the public, located on campus or off, and with a tight ideological framework or not helps significantly to shape students' activist strategies, targets, and goals. While charismatic leaders arise among students as among other categories of activist, the cases here show a near-universal organizational focus: of political clubs as in Singapore, party-linked cells in the Philippines, floating clusters in Indonesia, or carefully segregated student associations in China. These organizations, more than specific leaders or adherents, define their movements.

No social movement, student based or otherwise, is monolithic in its aims. While the literature broadly, and many of our own accounts here, may tend to privilege comparatively radical and/or leftist student movements, to focus exclusively on such groups would be blinkered. As some of the chapters in this volume illustrate, student movements in Asia have run the gamut from stridently socialist to right wing, religiously identified, ethnicist, and more. Regardless, the public and students themselves commonly assume that the collective identity "student" bears a presumption of activism and that student activism qua students is a natural state of affairs. Such a supposition characterizes few other actors in identity-based movements, apart from, perhaps, religious leaders or devotees in certain contexts (e.g., churchgoers in the early years of the American civil rights movement, per Polletta and Jasper 2001, 290).

With this rubric in mind, we can identify three broad categories of students from across the cases studied here: those who mobilize *as* students, driven by a sense of shared collective student identity;[5] those who mobilize, but who are spurred by identification with some other collective identity rather than as students and whose organizational forms and political strategies encompass (or aspire to encompass) nonstudent groups; and those who fail to mobilize politically, eschewing the collective action potential of their student status. (Returning to our definition of student activism: we focus here only on efforts that engage the

state in some way, even while acknowledging that students can and do organize apolitically, as well.) The relative balance among these categories depends on the presence of other leaders in society, of allies, of job opportunities after graduation, and more. Indonesia in the late 1990s, China and Burma in the late 1980s, and Thailand in the early 1970s present classic cases of the first category: concentrations of students who mobilize qua students. In all these instances, students claimed political voice in respect of their moral purity, legacy as past kingmakers, and lack of obvious material interest in the outcomes they sought. In some of these cases, students even consciously strove to exclude nonstudents from their actions. And in most, authoritarian controls had left a vacuum, as detailed later: few other social groups could mobilize so effectively or play the same role as students. In contrast, students in South Korea in the 1980s, Malaysia since the 1970s, and the Philippines in the 1980s organized at least in large part according to our second category: not as students per se, but in league with other social forces, be they workers, Islamists, or landless masses. As for the third category—students who fail to engage politically—while widespread across cases, Singapore since the mid-1970s and Japan since the 1960s present prototypical examples.

All three categories of students are always present in any polity, at any point in time. We propose several explanations for their relative prevalence. First and foremost are aspects of the state and regime. (We expand further upon these dimensions later.) When other political leaders are available and deemed competent, students will be less inclined or required to play a vanguardist role; while structure alone is never determinative, a paucity of educated, competent leaders or the stifling of other regime opponents helps to propel students to take the initiative. How tolerant or repressive that state is also feeds into students' decisions as to the expected costs and benefits of collective action—which is more likely when success seems plausible (Mansbridge and Morris 2001)—and hence whether they embrace an action-empowering collective identity. Coercive suppression clearly matters, but positive encouragement, for instance public incitement of students as future leaders of a young nation or praise of their past engagement, may be just as influential.

A second set of explanatory factors concerns civil society, particularly the availability of potential allies, their orientation, and students' stance vis-à-vis those other social groups. When student activists believe in the mobilizational potential and goals of other social forces (workers, peasants, their religious community, etc.), they may be more inclined to

merge their efforts with those of these counterparts, a phenomenon that especially comes to the fore in the second and third phases detailed previously. The nature of students' own organizations substantially determines the scope for and nature of such alliances. Segments among students in South Korea and Indonesia, for instance, took up factory work to show solidarity with organized industrial workers, while students in Malaysia have aligned with both prodemocracy nongovernmental organizations and an imagined global Islamic community. Their counterparts in China in the 1980s, on the other hand, fearing state infiltration of their organizations and suppression and doubtful of the capacity of the broader population to effect political change, hesitated to trust unknown others; they remained reluctant to forge broader alliances.

The third set of explanatory factors is socioeconomic: when students become very fearful that their activism might compromise their future material well-being (job prospects, ability to repay education loans, family welfare, etc.), they may focus cautiously on their role identity, minimizing distractions from their studies. In such cases, student engagement focuses often on narrowly defined campus issues, such as campus government or facilities. These effects, indeed, may be part of a larger syndrome of atomization or depoliticization under neoliberal economic regimes. Or seen differently, students who are more secure in their future prospects, but critical of their state's developmental programs, might feel compelled to lobby for a change of course, to spur economic progress or equity; such engagement might be alongside state-or civil society–based dissidents, if available, or might be independent.

Clearly, these possible explanatory factors are not the only ones available or in effect, but they are among the most salient in the cases reviewed here. Regardless of impetus, however, a given student's or organization's embrace or eschewal of "student" as a collective identity must be recognized as voluntary, contingent, and permissive of a full range of ideological and strategic possibilities.

Regime Type

To what extent is student activism shaped by the political regimes that govern society? To start with our most fundamental point: we find that students typically play a vanguard oppositional role when authoritarian political controls demobilize or shut out other forces. All the countries in our study, with the exception of Japan, have experienced periods of

nondemocratic rule during the last half-century in which ruling militaries, strongmen, or dominant parties have tried to suppress and control broader social forces in the service of nation building and developmental efforts, albeit using very different methods and with widely varying success. The ensuing repression of labor and the peasantry, the dependence of business, and the collaboration of religious elites with ruling coalitions in such conditions creates a political vacuum. Even acknowledging the many other factors that temper structuralist effects, it is striking how often students occupy this empty oppositional space. To a large degree, their prominence reflects the superior mobilizational advantages that accrue to students due to their social position, as already indicated.

Our observation here resonates with those made in earlier studies of student mobilization. Seymour Martin Lipset, for example, posits that student protest is more influential in poor countries that lack strong political institutions, allowing organized groups, including groups of students, to exercise greater political influence (1967, 6). Samuel Huntington famously labeled such weak institutionalization, when students, workers, and the poor protest and military coups proliferate, *praetorianism* (1968). As politics becomes more institutionalized, participation becomes more contained and stable.

The consequence of this pattern is that as societies democratize and as more pluralistic politics develop, student protest tends to become less important, a process compounded by changes in the nature and availability of higher education. Clear evidence for this general proposition is found in the cases of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, and even in less economically developed cases such as Thailand and Indonesia. As countervailing cases such as China demonstrate, political institutionalization is not the only way to enervate student protest, but it helps to explain why more developed states need to worry less about dissidence in the campus.

But there is a second puzzle that can be addressed by looking at regime form and the differential effects of repression, as touched on in the preceding section: why is it that students in some cases (such as China in the late 1980s or Indonesia in the 1970s and, to a lesser extent, in the late 1990s) tend to mobilize primarily *as* students, whereas in other conditions they think of themselves as part of wider social coalitions and try to develop links with other groups? In some cases, even when students begin to mobilize primarily *as* students—because of their superior capacity to do so in conditions of a political vacuum—their efforts rapidly merge with those of other groups (e.g., South Korea in the mid-1980s, Burma in 1988,

and Thailand from the 1970s on). In contrast, in other cases (again, e.g., China in 1989), a mobilizational spiral results in even more efforts by students to emphasize the purity of their goals and to prevent penetration by other groups. The degree of coercion that students believe regimes are capable of exercising partly explains the differing patterns: Chinese students in 1989 were mounting an unprecedentedly bold challenge to a regime that was equally intrusive and intolerant; in Indonesia in the 1970s, students had the relatively recent memory of the anticommunist massacres of 1965–66 to remind them of the regime's stance toward those who mobilized poorer social classes for revolutionary change. Emphasizing student "purity"—and stressing collective identity as students—is often a rational response to the threat of coercion.

However compelling, this argument does not hold for all cases: students in South Korea in the mid-1980s knew that the state was willing to engage in bloody repression against them when they challenged it, as the Gwangju massacre had so recently demonstrated. Yet students in this and similar cases not only engaged in antigovernment protest, but they also did so in ways that sought to merge with broader social forces, building cross-sectoral alliances and on the basis of antiauthoritarian ideologies (the *minjung* approach of the Korean students). The answer to this puzzle lies not only in the degree of coercion that regimes credibly exercise but also in their relative success or failure in constraining and co-opting other social and political forces. Nondemocratic regimes in the region have frequently aspired toward totalizing government control, but, for reasons that lie outside the scope of this study, few of them have achieved it. The stronger the organization and autonomy of other social and political forces, such as labor, business, opposition political parties, or religious organizations, the greater the likelihood that students will not emphasize their own collective identity as students so much, but orient more to these other groups. This tendency is most obvious in cases of leftist activism. Thus it is notable that student mobilization qua students (as distinct from mobilization *by* students) was relatively less pronounced in countries where large and diverse left-wing movements against authoritarianism managed to survive, such as in the Philippines and South Korea. Similarly, in Malaysia, when antigovernment mobilizations and electoral challenges began to accelerate in the late 1990s, those students who were prominent in these developments joined as participants in broader coalitions, not as a self-identified vanguard. Conversely in Indonesia in the 1970s and, to a lesser degree in the

1980s and 1990s, students' stress on "purity" and the reluctance of many of them to ally with other political forces was as much a rejection of what they saw as the dirty and corrupted world of official semioppositional politics as it was a reaction to the threat of repression.

One more factor bears consideration here, a path-dependent dynamic that may help to explain why a legacy of past involvement so powerfully motivates future engagement. In regimes in which students helped to install the government in power, they may assume the role of guardians of that regime's conduct: when a once-endorsed developmental authoritarian regime fails to deliver on its promises, students take it upon themselves to drag the regime back in line with its foundational mission. Hence Indonesian students in the 1970s sought to reform, not replace, the increasingly despotic New Order regime. We should not overstate the prevalence of this model, however. Relatively few of the countries in this sample followed this path; student opposition to authoritarian regimes from their inception was a far more common pattern, as in Korea or the Philippines.

A third regime puzzle we confronted repeatedly in the course of this project concerns the differential effects of repression. The states in all the countries studied subjected student movements to concerted repression at some point. Such repression assumed a variety of forms. Almost all countries saw peak moments of coercion when security forces cracked down brutally on student mobilizations: the Tiananmen Square incident is the archetypal such example in the countries we studied, but there were comparable incidents elsewhere—such as Ne Win's slaughter of Rangoon University students in July 1962; the October 1976 massacre in Thailand; waves of repression in Indonesia in 1974 and 1978; and the May 1980 massacre of students, workers, and other citizens in South Korea. In addition, in all the countries, governments introduced regulatory controls on campuses to constrain or preclude the possibility of antigovernment student protests, including by restructuring student unions, banning antigovernment activities, and curbing student media (e.g., in Malaysia and Singapore as of the mid-1970s).

Yet the effects of both brutal coercion and more systemic campus-based controls varied widely. In Korea, for example, after an initial dampening effect, the Gwangju massacre and related repression inflamed student and other protest, as popular outrage fed into the mobilization cycle that took hold in the mid-1980s. The 1976 crackdown in Bangkok, by contrast, radicalized some student activists in the short term, spurring many of them to join the Communist Party of Thailand guerrillas in the

countryside. Yet in retrospect, it is possible to see this event as marking the end of students' role as a distinct and highly influential antigovernment force in Thai politics: other forces have taken the lead in protests since then, even if students have lent their support. The repression in Indonesia in 1978 presents an intermediate case, effectively stifling organized student protest for a decade, after which new traditions of activism had to be built up outside campus government bodies through which activism had previously been expressed. Analysis of the relative effects of repression, across both time and space, resurfaces throughout the case studies to come.

Patterns, Clusters, and Waves

Our final analytical frame is one that takes account of the international and transnational influences and interconnections that help to shape student activism. This angle spans the extent of cross-national flows of students and texts, the relative vibrancy of transnational student organizations, and the attention students in one site give protesting peers in another. Through this lens, we explore whether the salience of leftist and anti-imperialist ideologies among students in the 1960s, for instance, was due more to shared local conditions across a variety of contexts or due to the influence of social movements internationally, including in the West (a charge with which their adversaries strove to diminish many Asian student movements in the 1960s).

Taken together and examining our cases, our four guiding perspectives reveal a sequence of loosely defined waves of protest frames among students across Northeast and Southeast Asia. The first is a leftist wave, beginning in about the late 1950s and lasting through approximately the early 1970s in which students turned against the objectives and methods of their states, whether aiming to return the polity to its foundational principles or to promote new, more egalitarian objectives and approaches. In this era of still highly elitist universities, at the cusp of the phase of disruptive massification, students often directed their protests against formally democratic regimes that they felt masked a procapitalist and pro-U.S. political agenda. Student protests in Japan in the 1960s and early 1970s can be best understood in these terms and shown to be similar in key ways to New Left-motivated protests in Western Europe and North America. Student movements in some other countries in the region, such as the Philippines, also bore the imprint of New Left

influences, but equally important in such cases was the influence of old socialist, labor, and revolutionary traditions. For example, Maoism was very important in the Philippines (and presented a point of commonality with student movements in other regions at the time as well), but in Singapore in the early 1970s, student activists had a more trade unionist orientation. This wave often ended badly, in repression, but in some cases (e.g., South Korea, the Philippines) the leftist tradition of student activism founded in this period remained very important for subsequent generations of student activists.

Next, beginning in approximately the late 1960s or early 1970s, we chart a developmentalist wave at a time when students faced strongly economically oriented, authoritarian states. With other groups repressed (particularly labor unions), students were often the first, and for a long period of time, the only group able and willing to protest. In some of these cases—Indonesia and China offer classic examples—student protestors were initially sympathetic to the regime's developmental goals, but they typically quickly grew impatient with rulers' corrupt practices and broken promises. In early protests against the regime, students held up developmental and participatory ideals that they felt the new regime had betrayed: they demanded not the end of developmental authoritarian rule, but the return to its ideological origins. In Indonesia, student protestors in the 1970s thus often called for the country's military rulers to "return to the people." In China, students had generally been supportive of new Chinese Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping's reforms until 1986–87, prefiguring the 1989 eruption when concerns about corruption and the desire for further political reform sparked major protests. Even then, however, as in Indonesia, student activists in China called for the regime to reform itself rather than demanding it be replaced. In both Indonesia in the 1970s and China in the 1980s, students consciously thought of themselves as a moral vanguard and had limited linkages with other groups. In both cases, too, student mobilization ended with severe regime repression. Although it is possible to identify instances when students in this phase were influenced by their contemporaries elsewhere in the region (e.g., student protestors in Indonesia in 1974, who were inspired by student protests the previous year in Bangkok), in relative terms, the extent of cross-fertilization informing these highly contingent campaigns was limited.

Finally, we note a democratization wave in which students press for systemic restructuring of authoritarian regimes. Beginning in the 1980s,

student activists in this period often did not see themselves as a lonely moral vanguard, but rather as coalition builders for a prodemocracy movement, seeking support not only on the Left (labor unions), but also in the center (the growing middle class), and even sometimes abandoning their identity as "student activists" to meld with larger struggles for political reform. Often, this phase of student mobilization followed massification of the education system, strengthening the tendency of students to join forces with or merge with other social forces. Student activists succeeded as vanguards of democracy movements in South Korea and Indonesia and as part of larger opposition coalitions in the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand. They were also significant in countries where such democratization movements faltered (Malaysia in 1998) or were repressed (Burma in 1988). In this period of mobilization, international diffusion and lesson drawing was significant, with students in some countries consciously seeking lessons in other protest events in the region. Indonesian students in 1998, for example, in part modeled their protests on the 1986 People Power revolt in the Philippines, and in turn inspired the Reformasi protests of later in 1998 in Malaysia.

Overall, while we do see clusters and waves of student activist trends, patterns of transnational diffusion and learning are inconsistent and ambiguous. Even when students followed trends among their peers closely, circumstances specific to their own condition—the stance and nature of the regime, situation of their universities, availability of nonstudent allies, and more—have been far more germane to the shape and nature of protest than lessons drawn from external examples. While we do find some coincidence of patterns, simultaneity of similar political and economic trajectories offers at least as compelling an explanation for those similarities as a process of real diffusion or transmission of activist packages does (c.f., Tsing 2005, 227–28). Moreover, where crackdowns on student protest included suppression of student media, especially after the heydays of international student unions faded in the 1970s, following global student protests grew more difficult. The rise of Internet-based media and networks facilitates information sharing and collaboration, yet what transnationalism we most readily observe consists more of expressions of support for struggling counterparts than emulation of their strategies. That said, students in a given context have invoked and copied especially iconic protest strategies in their own campaigns—we note connections among student activists in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in the 1980s–90s, for instance, or between those

in Malaysia and Indonesia in the late 1990s. And students have likewise validated their own engagement in terms of a widely respected global identity category of "student activism." Moreover, specific student groups have collaborated in training and conscientization exercises; just one example is students from across the region allied in the International Movement for Catholic Students Asia-Pacific, complete with publications and immersion-based study tours. These networks have encouraged sociopolitical activism in some cases, but generally on a limited scale. Whether transnational networking might motivate significant student protest in years to come, particularly as increasing numbers of students travel abroad for education and connect through borderless, immediate electronic media, remains to be seen.

Conclusion: Finding Trends and Patterns

How, then, are we to understand varying patterns of student activism both within and across the different countries of Northeast and Southeast Asia? Our framework suggests that we can explain much of the variation evident by applying the fourfold approach we have just outlined. As the lenses sketched here suggest, similar generative factors may spur different patterns of protests across the region. Our four lines of inquiry enable us to describe how and when that happens, by focusing on the education system, the development of collective identities and supportive organizations among students, the nature of regimes and how students are incorporated into them, and international diffusion and waves of activism. Taken together, these lenses produce four interlocking narratives that contextualize the how, when, and why of student activism.

The *education system story* focuses on the development of education systems as part of national development more broadly. It considers how phases and forms of educational development align with levels of activism among students. It is this angle that indicates, for instance, the likely impacts for student activism of curricular changes or of rapidly expanding access to tertiary education. The *collective identity story* looks at how students define themselves, whether primarily *as* students or as part of some larger group, and thus how they organize and orient their collective political engagement. The *regime story* explores how students fit in with different institutional patterns and phases of political development. It is this angle that best explains whether students will find a leadership vacuum, available allies, or channels for engagement. Last is

the *international diffusion story*, which examines how models of political action or ideological frameworks diffuse across the region, providing ideas and even modular strategies that students can borrow and adapt to local circumstances. Students in different countries at the same time thus may draw upon the same resonant international models of activism when they experience different phases of development of their education systems, adapt to different regime settings, and orient toward different collective identities. It is this complex and cross-cutting arrangement of the four different frameworks that determines the patterns of variation and similarity in student activism across the countries studied in this volume. We turn now to our cases, before revisiting these four interlaced stories in the concluding chapter.

Notes

1. Surveys of American students' attitudes toward the Vietnam War, for instance, found that "hawks" outnumbered "doves" as late as 1967, while only around 10 percent of students identified as seriously politically alienated or radical in the heated years of 1968–70 (Lipset 1971, 763–70).
2. See, for example, Altbach 1981 and 1982, Bakke and Bakke 1971, Emmerson 1968, Lipset 1967, Meyer and Rubinson 1972, Rootes 1980, or Weiss 2011, chapter 1.
3. This volume focuses more on the macrolevel, which involves changes in systems of higher education, rather than on the microlevel, which pertains to students' individual experiences. Both are germane and likely work significantly in tandem, but the latter topic falls beyond this book's necessarily limited scope.
4. Other examples, both prewar and postwar, can be found, for example, in South Korea (also beginning in 1919), Burma and Indonesia (in the 1920s and 1930s), Vietnam (in the 1930s), and Malaysia and Singapore (in the 1950s).
5. This reading oversimplifies to an extent: some proportion of those who organize as students may not identify as such; their choice of vehicle may relate more to convenience, social networks, or other factors. That said, the episodes of student-based mobilization surveyed here do overwhelmingly adopt an explicit framing as student activism, even if some members are relatively less committed to that frame.

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1 CHINA: REGIME SHAKERS AND REGIME SUPPORTERS

TERESA WRIGHT

Over the past century, China's students have experienced more dramatic changes than students in virtually any other country in the world. During this time period, China has moved from a tumultuous "Republican" government (1911–49), to radical Maoist rule (1949–76), to pragmatic yet somewhat divided Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership (1976–89), to pragmatic and united CCP governance (1990–present). Along with these changes in polity, China's educational system has been continuously transformed—moving from a traditional Confucian/feudal elitist model, to a Western elitist system, to a Maoist egalitarian model emphasizing manual labor and ideological purity, to a pragmatic elitist model, to a commercialized and "massified" system. In the international realm, China has gone from subjugation and humiliation at the hands of foreign powers, to international isolation, to begrudging international acceptance.

As these changes have unfolded, China's students at times have radically challenged the ruling regime or agitated for political reform, yet at other times they have acted collectively in support of policies associated with top political elites. These extreme variations make China an ideal case for the study of when and why students engage in collective action directed against the state. Overall, Chinese university students have been most prone to exhibit antigovernment activism when they have been a small and elite group with attenuated connections with the ruling regime and when ruling elites themselves have been divided.

China also provides perhaps the prototypical illustration of the thesis that students may play a vanguard role when other potential political forces are excluded or controlled by the authoritarian state. In particular, the contrast between the Republican and early post-Mao eras—the

two periods of greatest Chinese student activism directed at or against the state—lends support to this conception. During the early post-Mao period, which spanned the late 1970s through the 1980s, China had virtually no autonomous social powers (such as unions, political parties, or ethnic or religious groups); the ruling party penetrated and controlled all social organizations and associations. Simultaneously, the leaders of China's governing party-state were committed to the aim of economic modernization. Due at least in part to the regime's reliance on university students to achieve its developmentalist goals, as well as the almost total lack of other groups or organizations that might take the lead in pressing for political reform, students in this period were at the forefront of political activism. Cognizant that their special status gave them greater protection from official repression than was the case for other social groups, students emphasized their separateness and "purity." Conversely, in China's unstable Republican period that preceded Communist rule, the existence of a wide array of powerful and autonomous social groups and organizations diminished the degree to which students played a vanguard activist role, and also facilitated greater connections between students and other politically contentious groups.

Student Activism in Modern China: What Has Happened, When, and Why?

As noted previously, the character of Chinese students' collective behavior has not been consistent over time. In 1911–49 and 1976–89, student activism featured collective protests directed toward or against the ruling regime, in the sense that students either sought policy changes from the regime or sought to overthrow it. In contrast, in the periods of 1949–76 and 1990–2009, students' collective actions and demands often were instigated by dominant political elites, and they did not challenge official policies and political practices. In 1911–49 and 1976–89, three factors facilitated the rise of student activism directed toward or against the ruling regime: (1) students formed an elite stratum with a perceived moral responsibility to remonstrate with political leaders, (2) a formerly close relationship between students/intellectuals and the state was becoming attenuated, and (3) political authority was somewhat divided. In the periods spanning 1949–76 and 1990–the present, one or more of these factors were absent, and student activism exhibited a more proregime character.

The Republican Era (1911–49)

For much of the early part of the twentieth century, students were extremely active and highly influential. Chinese student protests during this time in many ways paralleled student anticolonial struggles in South Korea, Burma, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. Chinese student activism in this period also had a clear leftist bent. Indeed, by the end of this era, the student movement largely had merged with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Many factors contributed to the emergence and character of student activism in these years. First, the governing regimes of the period were weak and illegitimate, and numerous groups and individuals contended for political power. Following the 1911 fall of China's last imperial dynasty (the Qing), China's political situation was fluid. A national parliament was elected, but the new president, Yuan Shi-kai, who was also the country's most powerful military commander, ignored it. Following Yuan's 1916 death, various warlords (regional military leaders) successively controlled Beijing, the capital. In 1917, Kuomintang (KMT) leader Sun Yat-sen accepted the support of the warlord then in control of Canton, declaring the existence of a rival government under "Republican" rule. In 1921, the CCP was founded, working until 1927 in alliance with the KMT. In 1927, KMT and CCP forces launched the joint Northern Expedition to take control of the country; KMT troops (under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek since Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925) pressed northeast toward Shanghai, while CCP forces moved due north to Wuhan. As KMT troops approached Shanghai, CCP-affiliated students and workers staged a remarkable revolt, successfully taking power from the local warlord militia. When KMT forces arrived, they confiscated the rebels' weapons and massacred their leaders—many of whom were students. The KMT then pressed northward, ultimately gaining control of the country as a whole. In the 1930s, Japanese military intrusions again destabilized the political situation, further weakening the KMT, yet also allowing for the growth of the CCP. After Japan's 1945 World War II surrender, the KMT and the CCP became embroiled in a civil war. The war lasted until 1949, when the CCP finally emerged victorious and the KMT and its supporters fled en masse to the island of Taiwan. In this destabilized political environment, the weakness and division of political authority provided an opening for student dissent and activism.

Second, traditional linkages between students/intellectuals and the state were severed in the Republican era. From the early seventh century through the early twentieth century, education in imperial China had focused on civil service exams that led to positions in the government bureaucracy. In 1905, the civil service exam system was abolished, with no new effective recruitment system to replace it (Chow 1960, 8). From that time until the end of the Republican period, sufficient economic opportunities did not exist to provide university graduates with "acceptable alternatives" for employment (Chow 1960, 94). This problem worsened during the late 1940s, when university enrollments rose (Lutz 1971, 91; Chow 1960, 94). As a result, university students at the time were "uncertain regarding their postgraduate professional prospects" (Chow 1960, 94). Students' waning connection with the ruling regime heightened the appeal of antigovernment collective action.

Third, China's educated population remained an elite social stratum. In the Republican era, only about 20 percent of the citizenry was literate. In 1919, out of a population of roughly 500 million nationwide, the total number of university students in Beijing was between fifteen thousand and twenty-five thousand. Students' feeling of commonality with one another and separation from the rest of society was furthered by their living conditions, which featured crowded dormitories and regimented study and leisure schedules (Chow 1960, 9, 96, 99, 380). Further, since imperial times, intellectuals had been viewed as having a special responsibility to remonstrate with ruling elites.

The combination of these factors facilitated the rise of a "new thought movement" on China's university campuses in the second decade of the 1900s. Reflecting the openness and fluidity of China's political environment at the time, three of the movement's most influential individuals—Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, and Hu Shi—studied abroad in Japan, France, and the United States, respectively. After returning to China, they instigated the movement through the publication of new journals (Chow 1960, 44–61, 73–77; Gu 2001). Through their positions of power in China's higher education system (Cai became the chancellor of Beijing University [Beida] in 1916; Chen was the dean of Beida's School of Arts and Sciences; and Hu was a lecturer at Beida), they succeeded in creating a new Western-style educational system in Republican-era China. While abroad, these individuals—as well as many other student movement participants in this period—had been exposed to new intellectual trends and economic, social, and political realities. Many

subsequently became highly critical of China's traditional culture and politics, and extremely interested in modern alternatives (Chow 1960, 9, 22–40). In the words of historian Edward Gu, student and intellectual activists circa 1919 "appreciated 'democracy' and 'socialism' as the two signs of the 'new tides in the world'" (2001, 594). Faced with China's humiliation and subjugation at the hands of more powerful and economically advanced foreign regimes—a development that in the minds of many educated Chinese was enabled by the weakness and "backwardness" of China's governmental system—students called for the importation of "new thoughts from the West" and the reevaluation and even destruction of "the system of Chinese traditional values" (Gu 2001, 591–92). At the same time, they were inspired by "the socialist movement in Europe and the Communist revolution in Russia," seeing them as manifestations of the "'triumph of laborers over capitalists' beside the 'triumph of democracy over monarchy' and the 'triumph of the common people over warlords'" (Gu 2001, 608).

In 1919, the intellectual movement on China's campuses became more overtly political and concrete (Wasserstrom 1991, 44; Chow 1960, 79). During World War I, Japan had pressed upon China a much-hated list of Twenty-One Demands, expanding Japan's territorial intrusion on Chinese soil. When the war ended, most educated Chinese expected that China—an Allied power during the war—would be granted full sovereignty over its territory. Yet at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, China's Shandong peninsula was ceded to Japan. When news of China's failure to regain Shandong reached China, student organizations across Beijing collectively resolved to hold a mass demonstration. Their ire was directed at both foreign governments and the ruling warlord regime, as it had become public knowledge that Japan's acquisition of Shandong had been ensured by secret wartime agreements not only among Japan, France, and Germany, but also between Japan and the warlord government in Beijing (Chow 1960, 99).

On May 4, 1919, students gathered on their campuses. Government representatives arrived with police garrisons to dissuade the students from acting. Uncowed, the students marched to Tiananmen Gate (which fronts the Forbidden City in central Beijing) and then to the home of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cao Rulin, who was believed to have negotiated the secret wartime agreement with Japan. When Cao refused to meet with the students and gendarmes tried to force the students back, students broke into the house, beating China's minister to Japan and

ultimately setting the house aflame. In the melee that followed, one student died and thirty-two were imprisoned (Chow 1960, 105–14).

A wave of student-led collective actions ensued: students in most major cities initiated boycotts of classes and of Japanese goods and established new organizations. By mid-May, students across China were holding street assemblies that drew ordinary citizens into the movement. In Shanghai, students also established liaison groups to work with merchant societies and a labor department to communicate with workers (Chow 1960, 143). On June 1, the Beijing regime ordered students to return to classes and proclaimed martial law in the capital. In the days that followed, more than a thousand students were arrested for violating these orders.

The mass arrests aroused indignation among China's urban residents. In Shanghai, students mobilized merchants and workers to join a mass strike. On June 5, virtually the entire city and its suburbs were shut down. Simultaneously, strike supporters formed an association of merchant and labor groups, the press, and the all-Shanghai student union (Chow 1960, 153–54, 158). The strike quickly spread to virtually all major Chinese cities. Under immense pressure, the Beijing regime released all arrested students and accepted the resignation of the three officials deemed responsible for the secret agreement with Japan, including Vice Foreign Minister Cao.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, students became increasingly organized, influential, and left leaning. In 1919, student activists founded the National Student Association. As reported by historian John Israel, by the 1920s the association had become "one of the most influential voices of public opinion in China" (1968: 233). In 1921, "new thought movement" leaders Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao were instrumental in founding the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

By early 1925, the warlord regime in Beijing had further weakened, and opposition political organizations such as the KMT and the CCP were stronger and more closely linked with students. Concomitantly, student activists developed more revolutionary aims. As a result of these factors, in 1925, students and workers were even more united than in 1919. In the early 1920s, Shanghai students had established night schools for workers. Their goal had been to "promote class and national consciousness and thereby lay the foundation for a revolutionary labor movement" (Wasserstrom 1991, 96). Similarly, in February 1925, when workers at a Japanese factory in Shanghai went on strike, students "took an active part in unionizing workers, raising funds to support the strike, publicizing the strikers' grievances, and working to gain the release of

arrested laborers" (Wasserstrom 1991, 99). Students also reportedly joined the striking workers on the picket line, carrying "flags threatening violence to scabs" (Wasserstrom 1991, 99). On May 30, 1925, more than two thousand students and workers demonstrated in Shanghai, protesting the killing of a Chinese worker at a Japanese textile factory. Along with arrests, eleven students and workers were killed, and twenty were wounded. By early June, a general strike paralyzed Shanghai, and sympathy strikes and demonstrations had occurred in more than two dozen other Chinese cities. A nearly sixteen-month boycott of Japanese and British goods ensued (Chow 1960, 56; Wasserstrom 1991, 101–24).

After the KMT gained control of China through the 1927 Northern Expedition, the political situation stabilized for a few years. With Chiang Kai-shek firmly at the helm of government, the National Student Association was dissolved, and university students were told to "stick to their books" (Israel 1968, 234–36). With this relatively unified, resolute, and repressive state leadership, student activism waned.

In 1931, Japan's invasion of Manchuria (in Northeastern China) precipitated renewed student activism. Believing that KMT leader Chiang had not put up sufficient resistance against this foreign aggression, for three months students flocked to the capital (which had been moved to Nanking as a result of Japan's military advance) to protest. Along with many peaceful demonstrations, student mobs roughed up KMT officials (nearly beating to death the foreign minister) and destroyed the offices of the KMT newspaper. The combination of a harsh KMT response—including the imprisonment of most left-leaning students—and a lull in Japanese aggression brought this wave of activism to an end.

In December 1935, renewed Japanese pressure sparked yet another wave of student protests. Students across the country participated in large demonstrations that grew into a "national salvation movement," pressing Chiang to agree to a truce with the CCP and resistance to Japan (Israel 1968, 235–36). In May 1936, a new—and this time clearly procommunist—National Student Association was founded.

From the late 1930s until Japan's surrender in 1945, activism on the part of students with a distinct identity *as students* virtually disappeared. Some university students endured miserable living conditions while working desk jobs for the KMT government, and some joined the KMT army. Many others worked with CCP forces, which were busily organizing and expanding in Northeastern China, behind Japanese lines (Israel 1968, 236–37).

Following Japan's defeat in World War II, civil war erupted between the KMT and CCP. By this time, most Chinese youth had become thoroughly disillusioned with KMT rule. In May 1947, student rebellions peaked in an "antihunger, anti–civil war" movement (Israel 1968, 237). In the words of John Israel, "the ramshackle housing, substandard diets, shortages of books and laboratory equipment, and restraints on freedom that had been endured as necessary during the struggle against Japan now seemed not merely unnecessary, but intolerable" (1968, 237). In this context, Chinese students turned toward the CCP as the only "forward-looking organization dedicated to universal ideals of youth" and the only political entity seemingly able to unify and stabilize the country (Israel 1968, 237). By 1949, the CCP had gained control of the mainland, and the KMT had fled to Taiwan.

The Maoist Era (1949–76)

Following the CCP's victory in 1949, the political context was almost completely transformed, with the result that student activism in the traditional sense of protest directed toward or against the state disappeared, and regime-instigated (though not always regime-controlled) activism emerged. Under Mao, the former elite status and role of university students were destroyed. The new educational system was devoted to crushing all intellectual learning and academic pursuits. The goal was to create a devoted mass of equal and ideologically pure communists and to do away with all forms of elitism. Accordingly, primary, secondary, and tertiary education became focused on manual labor and the cultivation of ideological correctness. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, China's universities were shut down almost entirely, and few youths earned a university degree. Former university students and intellectuals were castigated as "rightists," forced to undergo reeducation in labor camps, and sent to the countryside to engage in manual labor. Despite some small ebbs and flows, from 1949 until 1976 the CCP was firmly under Mao's command, leaving little opening for citizens to voice their grievances about these political practices.

Even so, young people who attended school in the Maoist period were at times highly mobilized and politically active. Their activities were instigated by Mao in response to high-level divisions within the political leadership. Most significantly, young "students" constituted a large portion of the Red Guards who acted on Mao's urging during

the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (particularly from 1966–69) to expose alleged "rightists" and "ghosts and monsters" in positions of political and social authority, and to root out, criticize, and destroy manifestations of feudal and capitalist culture and thinking. Although the Red Guards' actions initially were encouraged and sanctioned by Mao, these youths acted with great spontaneity and autonomy as they carried out what they believed to be Mao's wishes. These acts inspired student activism not only in Asia (particularly Japan), but also around the world. However, by 1969, Mao had become sufficiently concerned with the actions of the Red Guards that he ordered the army to halt the youths' activities. Subsequently, this distinctive form of student activism came to an end in China.

The Early Post-Mao Era (1976–89)

Following the death of Mao in 1976, the status of students and intellectuals again was transformed, facilitating the reemergence of student activism directed toward, and sometimes against, the state. This activism peaked with the student-led protests of 1989, which drew the participation of millions of citizens in virtually every major city and persisted for more than six weeks. Three key factors explain the resurgence of contentious student behavior during this period. First, as had been the case in the Republican era, students in the early post-Mao period formed a distinct, elite social stratum.[1] To promote China's scientific and technological modernization, in 1978 a unified national entrance exam was reinstituted, emphasizing academic knowledge rather than Maoist ideology (Thorgersen 1989, 33, 52).[2] Through the 1980s, access to universities was determined by a student's score on this examination, and admission was extremely limited ("Education Finance" 2005, 27).[3] Within the population as a whole from the late 1970s through the late 1980s, roughly one-tenth of 1 percent of the Chinese citizenry were university students, and just over 1 percent were university graduates (Guo 2005, 373; China Statistical Yearbook 1998, 105).[4] This elite status gave students a feeling of separation from other social sectors, but also a sense of responsibility to act as a moral compass for the country.

Second, the economic and career ties between students and the ruling regime became increasingly attenuated. Most university graduates became state sector employees, with incomes and living standards only marginally higher than those of their uneducated coworkers ("Education

Finance" 2005, 26). Yet as the regime embarked upon policies to liberalize the planned economy, new opportunities for economic advancement arose outside of the state sector. As a result, citizens without a university education but with ties to the ruling party became wealthy. In turn, students became increasingly dissatisfied with their socioeconomic position and enraged at the perceived corruption within the CCP.

Third, splits emerged within the CCP's top leadership, fueled by a division between elites such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang who pressed for hastened and expanded economic and educational reforms and others with a more cautious and conservative approach. As these factions clashed, the government displayed somewhat schizophrenic behavior toward college students. Between the late 1970s and the late 1980s, policies swung back and forth, at times ceding greater autonomy and power to university students and administrators and at times repressing and constricting their freedom (Goldman 1994). Together, these developments provided openings for student activism to emerge, as well as cause for student dissatisfaction.

Yet unlike the Republican era, in the early post-Mao period there was an almost total absence of other social groups free from control by the ruling regime. In the years immediately following Mao's death, the CCP remained firmly in charge of the political system, including all forms of association (such as unions and religious groups) and the mass media. Further, although the CCP's post-Mao leaders were divided over the proper pace and extent of reform, they were pragmatic at heart and shared a developmentalist commitment to economic modernization. China's universities (which had been tentatively reopened in 1975) were seen as crucial to the achievement of the state's new developmentalist aim. This combination of factors in the early post-Mao period spurred students to act as a vanguard force for political liberalization.

In the first half of 1986, CCP elites in favor of hastened efforts to achieve economic modernization—most notably party General Secretary Hu Yaobang—publicly argued for further educational, political, and administrative reform. A few months later, students at one of China's premier technical universities—the University of Science and Technology (UST) in Anhui province—met to protest their inability to nominate candidates for the local people's congress. Before long, students across the country expressed their support. Students also complained about their poor living conditions, including relatively high-priced but low quality cafeteria food. In addition, students expressed indignation at the gap

between their elite educational status and their low salaries upon graduation—a disjuncture that was made all the more upsetting by the relative affluence enjoyed by those with lesser academic credentials but greater connections with representatives of the party-state (Kwong 1988).

As campus protest activities spread across the country—including roughly forty thousand students at 150 higher education institutions in seventeen cities—divisions within the ruling regime became more apparent (Kwong 1988). While General Secretary Hu quietly indicated his support of the students, the CCP's most powerful leader—Deng Xiaoping—instructed party elites to bring the movement to an end (Rosen 1988, 36). At UST, activist Vice President Fang Lizhi (who had voiced a radical cry for total Westernization) was expelled from the party and dismissed from his position. Within the top ranks of the CCP, General Secretary Hu was forced to resign from his post. Yet even so, Hu remained in the party's Politburo, and Hu's younger protégé, Zhao Ziyang, became the new general secretary. In official media outlets, the protestors' demands were castigated as bourgeois liberalism, and participants were described as having been led by a "handful of lawbreakers who disguised themselves as students," bent on fomenting nationwide chaos and disrupting stability and unity (*People's Daily*, 1987). Yet even so, the student participants generally were not punished, and central authorities did respond to some of the protestors' grievances (Kwong 1988, 981–83).

When former General Secretary Hu died on April 15, 1989, spontaneous popular mourning soon developed into renewed activism by university students. Exacerbating the grievances that had not been resolved by the protests of 1986–87—particularly official corruption and poor living conditions—inflation soared into the double digits. As students posted "big character" posters and presented memorial wreaths for Hu both on campus and at Beijing's central Tiananmen Square, their writing and speeches increasingly took on a political tone. Along with castigating corrupt cadres (such as Deng Xiaoping's son) who used their political connections to profit from market reforms, students demanded democratic rights such as freedom of association and speech. As in the Republican era, in both 1986–87 and 1989, student activists saw Western values and practices as superior to the "backward" and "inferior" attributes of China's existing political, social, and economic systems. Simultaneously, student activists in 1989 were influenced by budding anticommunist movements in Poland and other Eastern and Central European states.

Yet at base, their political critique was developmentalist in the sense that students consistently professed their loyalty to the regime's stated goals and emphasized their patriotic desire to aid in the country's development. In the words of one movement document, the students wished to "help the Party and government improve their work, [and] to push forward our country's reform, opening, and modernization process" (Beijing Students Autonomous Federation Dialogue Delegation 1989). More specifically, student demonstrators called for a reassessment of "the achievements of Hu Yaobang, recognizing achievements made regarding democracy and freedom"; the permission of unofficial newspapers; the initiation of a requirement that "officials make public their incomes"; and a reassessment of the antibourgeois liberalization campaign that followed the student protests of 1987 (Beida Preparatory Committee 1989). Similarly reflecting their fundamental acceptance of CCP rule, student activists repeatedly requested to hold a dialogue with CCP elites and presented their demands to the authorities through written petitions presented on bent knee.

By April 22, autonomous student organizations free from CCP control or guidance had formed on numerous Beijing campuses, and an all-Beijing autonomous federation of university students had been established (Wright 1999, 149–54). On April 26, the front page of the CCP's official newspaper, *The People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao*), castigated these student activities. Titled "It Is Necessary to Take a Clear-Cut Stand Against Turmoil," the article warned "if we tolerate this disturbance, a seriously chaotic state will appear, and we will be unable to have reform, opening, and higher living standards" (Oksenberg, Sullivan, and Lambert 1990, 207–8).

Fearful yet determined, more than one hundred thousand students from virtually every tertiary education institution in Beijing defied this CCP threat on April 27 and marched for hours from the university district to Tiananmen Square. Hundreds of thousands of city residents lined the streets to watch and express their support. At various points, the student marchers were met by police blockades, but when the students showed no sign of stopping, the blockades dispersed. Buoyed by their success, students held a second mass gathering at Tiananmen Square on May 4 in commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement of 1919. More than one hundred thousand students participated.

Yet the government remained intransigent. Frustrated by a lack of progress, on May 13 a group of students marched to Tiananmen Square

and initiated a hunger strike. Aware that the CCP planned a gala event at the square to welcome then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to Beijing on May 15, the hunger-striking students hoped that their act would finally press the regime to respond.[5] On May 14, ruling elites conceded to hold a formal dialogue with some student representatives, but the talks quickly collapsed. The CCP's welcoming ceremony for Gorbachev was scrapped, and the hunger-striking students remained in the square.

Immediately following Gorbachev's departure from China on May 19, regime divisions again became publicly apparent. Top CCP leaders—led by Deng Xiaoping—declared martial law and ordered military units to clear the square. Premier Zhao reportedly cast the lone dissenting vote. Subsequently, he visited the students at the square, apologizing for coming too late. As the soldiers moved from the outskirts of the city to the center, they were met by hundreds of thousands of city residents who spontaneously poured into the streets to block them. With apparently no clear orders regarding how to respond to such a situation, the army retreated.

For the next two weeks, students debated the proper course of action, and CCP elites bent on suppressing the movement crafted a more detailed and fail-safe plan. On June 3–4, 1989, the regime's dominant elites moved to finally end the protests. Soldiers again pressed from the outer reaches of Beijing toward the city center, and again ordinary citizens flooded the streets to block them. Yet this time the soldiers used violent force against anyone who stood in their way. An estimated two thousand were killed, and many thousands more were injured.[6] A few days later, Premier Zhao was dismissed from his post and placed under house arrest, where he remained until his death in 2005. Although the official verdict in the government-controlled media was similar to that employed against the student-led protests of 1986–87, its language was much more vehement: a "small handful" had incited "chaos" and "pandemonium," resulting in a "shocking counter-revolutionary rebellion"—a "struggle involving the life and death of the party and the state" (Chen 1989).

Thus, although in reality student protestors in the 1980s desired reform rather than revolution, by 1989 key CCP leaders had come to believe that university students were a dissident force bent on fundamental political change. In the eyes of many foreign observers, too, Chinese university students appeared to be at the vanguard of a popular movement for democratization. Yet subsequently, the constellation of factors that facilitated the emergence of contentious student activism in the 1980s shifted, with the result that student protests of this sort all but disappeared.

Indeed, from 1990 through the present, when opportunities for political activism directed at the central state have arisen, students have not mobilized. Perhaps mostly notably, when an opposition political party was formed (and later crushed) in 1998, 41 of its top 151 leaders had a university education, but only two of these individuals had entered university in 1990 or later (Wright 2002). Further, when important anniversaries have passed—such as the twentieth anniversary of the 1989 protests in 2009—China's university students have been silent.

The lack of student activism directed against or toward the CCP in the late post-Mao era derives from the disappearance of the factors that facilitated this type of activism in the Republican and early post-Mao periods. First, since the early 1990s China's higher education system has been marketized and expanded, with the result that the elite status of university students has dramatically diminished. During this period, the regime's commitment to merit-based tertiary education has fallen largely by the wayside, and money has come to play a key role in university enrollment (Rosen 2004a, 166). In terms of admission, having attended elite, tuition-charging primary, middle, and high schools has become increasingly important. Even for students who have been accepted to university, the required tuition and fees have become prohibitive for most families (Huang 2001). Consequently, since the early 1990s, university students in China have been drawn less from the ranks of the most academically meritorious and more from the pool of financially privileged families that have benefited from China's market reforms in the post-Mao era (Rosen 2004b, 35).

Concomitantly, central authorities have expanded university admissions (Liu 2006, 146). As a result, post-secondary education has become far less exclusive. Whereas in the first half of the reform era, only around 4 percent of those who took the national exam gained university admission, in 2003, this proportion reached 60 percent ("Education Finance" 2005, 27). By 2008, approximately 23 percent of Chinese citizens ages 18–24 were enrolled in a tertiary educational institution (Wang 2003, 268). Within the population as a whole, the percentage of people with college degrees has more than tripled since the early reform era (Guo 2005, 374).

This massification of China's higher education system has led to a shift in students' perception of the purpose of their college education.

In the elite system of the early post-Mao era, a university degree was viewed primarily as a means to become part of the social/political elite involved in government and administration. Since the early 1990s, in contrast, higher education has become seen mainly as a vehicle to make money and enjoy a high material standard of living. In this sense, students in the late post-Mao era have taken on more of a functional identity than a collective identity. Thus, relative to the Republican and early post-Mao eras, they have been less prone to engage in contentious political action *as students*.

Simultaneously, the expansion in university admissions since the early 1990s has intensified employment competition among degree holders. Beginning in 1997, the government ceased to assign jobs to university graduates (Guo 2005, 386–87). As a result, new degree holders no longer have been assured employment. Even so, those with a tertiary education have enjoyed greatly expanded opportunities to become wealthy, due to China's opening to foreign investment and boom in the private sector since the early 1990s.

These developments have diminished the early post-Mao era connection between university students and the state via public sector employment. Yet at the same time, the expansion of higher education and resultant increase in job competition in the late post-Mao period have led many students to seek closer ties to the CCP as a means of attaining material comfort and high social status. While in the first half of the reform period government assignment of jobs in the public sector meant that degree holders would have stable employment yet a rudimentary standard of living, in the latter portion of the post-Mao era, those with a tertiary education have had to fend for themselves. Those who succeed may enjoy a very comfortable lifestyle, yet success is in no way guaranteed. In this context, CCP membership has given university graduates a decisive edge in the job market (Guo 2005, 387; Rosen 2004a, 169). The overall result among the college educated has been a reduced desire to challenge the political establishment and a heightened interest in joining it (Rosen 2004a, 169).

Concomitantly, since 1990, the top leadership of the CCP has been remarkably united. With prior leaders who had shown sympathy with student protestors (such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang) dead, under house arrest, or otherwise silenced, post-1989 party elites have agreed on the need to continue economic reforms yet limit political reform. Thus the factional divisions within the CCP that facilitated the

emergence of student activism in the early post-Mao period largely have disappeared. As a result of these factors, college students in China's late reform era have evidenced virtually no public political contentiousness directed at the ruling regime. On the few occasions when they have engaged in collective demonstrations in the late post-Mao era, China's students generally have not challenged ruling authorities, but rather have echoed official concerns.

In May 1999, students took to the streets in more than a hundred Chinese cities in protest against the American military's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. In Beijing, thousands demonstrated in front of the U.S. embassy, and some attacked American businesses such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. The protests were spontaneous. However, governing authorities displayed support for the students' actions, helping to transport students to and from rallies and endorsing the students' claim that they were reviving the May Fourth (1919) tradition. At the same time, political elites made efforts to keep the protests under control (Wasserstrom 1999, 55, 61; Zhao 2003). In addition, state authorities undertook efforts to discourage ordinary workers from participating in the protests. After only a few days, students were convinced to cease their activities and return to campus (Wasserstrom 2005, 61; Gries 2004, 189–90).

In April 2005, students marched in major cities to protest Japan's revision of its textbooks in a way that diminished Japanese atrocities in China during World War II. At times, the protests turned aggressive. In Beijing, demonstrators threw bottles at the Japanese embassy, and in Shanghai marchers vandalized Japanese businesses. When several anti-Japanese websites called for mass demonstrations in early May (to coincide with the anniversary of the May Fourth Movement of 1919), government officials announced that future "unauthorized marches" would be illegal and warned that police "would mete out tough blows" to those caught vandalizing property (Yardley 2005, 1).

In the spring of 2008, students again took to the streets. The spark of the protests was a clash in Tibet on March 14, wherein Tibetan street demonstrators calling for greater autonomy were linked to the destruction of Han Chinese businesses. CCP authorities responded with force. As the Olympic torch traveled overseas in anticipation of the Beijing Olympics, foreign protestors criticized China's ruling elites and interfered with the progress of the relay. In China, students erupted in protest—defending China's integrity and castigating media outlets, groups, and

individuals critical of China's response to the demonstrators in Tibet. Overseas Chinese students in Japan, Europe, Australia, and the United States did the same—at times leading to angry confrontations with pro-Tibet activists. As with the other student protests of the late post-Mao period, participants voiced no criticism of China's governing authorities or political system; rather, they amplified the stance of the official media. When a massive earthquake struck China's Sichuan province in May, the student protests ended, and foreign criticism of China's political system became subdued.

When and Why Have Students United with Other Social Groups?

Looking back at the last century of student activism in China, in addition to finding dramatic variations in the level and intensity of protest, one also can see significant variations in students' propensity to ally with other social groups. During the two time periods in which student protests directed at or toward the regime emerged in China (i.e., the Republican era and the early post-Mao era), student activists evidenced very different behavior in terms of their inclination to ally with other social groups. This difference is particularly apparent with regard to student attitudes and behavior vis-à-vis blue-collar workers. In the Republican period, student activists often worked closely with rank-and-file laborers. In the early post-Mao period, in contrast, student protestors evidenced great hesitance to publicly align with workers. The fundamental cause of this difference lies in the different political context faced by students in each period. In both eras, students seem to have desired close connections with workers, but in the early post-Mao period, the ruling regime's solid control over the state heightened student concerns with repression. Further, in the early post-Mao era there were no strong and autonomous social groups (such as unions or political parties) with which students could ally. Similarly, virtually all media outlets were controlled by the ruling CCP. In addition, the state's clear developmentalist goal of economic and technological modernization in the early post-Mao era gave university students a special status that other socioeconomic sectors lacked. These realities overwhelmed any student desires for closer linkages with workers and led student activists to take great care to demonstrate the "purity" of their ranks and their lack of linkages with other social sectors and groups. As noted before, this configuration of factors in the early post-Mao era led students to act

as vanguards in a political vacuum—a phenomenon seen in countries across Asia in the post–World War II period.

The Republican Era

As noted previously, during the Republican period, China's ruling regime was weak, and nongovernmental social, political, and cultural groups were vibrant. The ability and desire of students to unite with other social sectors and groups were heightened by these realities. In virtually all of the protests during this period, student activists enjoyed vocal public support from a variety of arenas—including in media outlets—and believed that unified actions with nonstudent groups would only further strengthen their cause.

In 1919, for example, following the arrests of May 4, the vast majority of Beijing media outlets "frankly stated their sympathy with the students" (Chow 1960, 124). In addition, KMT leader Sun Yat-sen sent a telegram in support of the students to the Beijing government. Public approval of the students also was voiced by conservative forces not affiliated with the Beijing regime, including other warlords and monarchists (Chow 1960, 124, 127). As described in more detail previously, 1919 student activists established special groups to work with merchant organizations and workers, and they mobilized these sectors to engage in a joint mass strike.

By 1925, the political situation was even more fluid, and student activists became even more closely connected with other social groups. As discussed earlier, students immersed themselves in labor actions, including unionization efforts, strike preparations, publicity, legal assistance, street marches, and boycotts. Simultaneously, the student movement increasingly merged with the CCP, such that by the end of this period, the two were virtually indistinguishable.

The Early Post-Mao Era

In the two most prominent student movements of the early post-Mao era—in 1986–87 and in 1989—students exhibited far less inclination to unite with other social groups; on the contrary, they displayed clear concerns with maintaining the appearance of student "purity" vis-à-vis other sectors. The basic reason for this difference lies in the fact that, unlike in the Republican period, in the early post-Mao period the regime was strong and stable, and nongovernmental groups and organizations—including

media outlets—had little to no autonomy from the state. To the contrary, China's civil society was subject to quasi-totalitarian controls.

The debilitating effect of this political context on students' ability and desire to unite with other socioeconomic groups was most evident in the protests of 1989. In 1986–87, the student movement was relatively short-lived and mostly campus-based, and as a result had little involvement with other groups. In 1989, students did evidence some interest in working with nonstudents. For example, the All-Beijing City Students' Autonomous Federation gave funds to the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, which was organized on the north side of the square in mid-May (Shen 1998, 277; German Rhine Writers 1993, 298). Students also went to factories to help organize autonomous worker organizations (German Rhine Writers 1993, 33).

Yet simultaneously, movement leaders in 1989 displayed clear concern with maintaining public boundaries between students and protestors from other socioeconomic sectors. When students marched, those on the perimeters of each contingent joined hands to separate the students from nonstudent onlookers and participants. Moreover, once the students began to occupy Tiananmen Square, security lines were created, and participants were required to show student identification cards before entering the confines of the square.

As in Indonesia, these measures reflected at least in part the students' self-identity as "pure" and "moral" actors with a unique social status and responsibility. Relatedly, they may have been partially motivated by student beliefs that groups such as workers and peasants were driven by only material concerns (Perry 1992). Yet in interviews and other public statements, student leaders from 1989 emphasized that their separation from workers and other social groups was undertaken mainly in order to avoid official slander and repression in the entirely government-controlled media. As one influential movement participant explained, "The security line [separating students and nonstudents] was employed mainly because the students feared government repression. During every democratic movement, the government said it was 'chaotic,' that the demonstrators were 'used' by others. The students had to be very careful, so the government couldn't say they were inducing violence or chaos, or that freedom leads to bad things" (author interview, 1995).

Similarly, another student leader related, "In order to control the movement and keep it nonviolent, we needed a security line. From the April Fifth Movement [of 1976, when people gathered in Tiananmen

Square to demonstrate in memory of the late Premier Zhou Enlai], we learned that the CCP may have plain-clothed agents who can burn a car or something else and later accuse the people in the demonstration. This happened many times in PRC history, and happened again in 1989" (author interview, 1995).

A third student stated, "Because we were afraid that the government would say that we were being 'used by a small group,' we decided to make a [security line]" (author interview, 1995). In the same way, a fourth interviewee stated, "The security line was especially important after martial law. We had to be well-organized in order to protect ourselves. Any small violence could have had huge repercussions" (author interview, 1995). In brief, the students adopted strict measures to enforce order and student "purity" in order to guard against official slander and repression. In other words, the students' strategy was primarily a logical response to the patterns of repression that they had experienced in the past, as well as the regime-controlled media's current attempts to slander the movement and provide justification for its repression. During the Republican era, student activists did not face similar constraints and challenges.

Also unlike in the Republican era, and unlike many of the other cases covered by this book, in 1989, Chinese students had particular concerns about uniting more overtly with workers. Even the most organized worker group in 1989 (the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation) contained very few individuals, with a core of only some 150 activists, whereas tens of thousands of students formed hundreds of formal autonomous organizations. Moreover, the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation did not publicly declare its existence until mid-May, by which time students had already been organizing and engaging in large-scale marches and demonstrations for a full month (Walder and Gong 1993, 6–7). Even more importantly, while the CCP had made it clear that students would be allowed to engage in protest activities, even the slightest worker activism was severely punished. No students were arrested from the beginning of the movement on April 15 through its forced end on June 4, despite the fact that students had engaged in a great many illegal activities and had occupied Tiananmen Square—to the great embarrassment of the Communist Party. Nonetheless, prior to movement's brutal end, the only persons to be arrested were workers. Overall, perhaps due to the regime's fear of a mass-based uprising and its need to cultivate student support in the quest for economic modernization, the government seemed willing to tolerate sustained, large-scale activities on the part of the students, yet

crushed even small-scale worker activism. Thus, the students felt their safety could be ensured only through a clear separation from workers.

Conclusion: When Students Challenge Rulers

The wide variation in the extent and nature of student activism in modern China suggests the conditions under which students are most likely to collectively challenge ruling authorities. In the Republican and early post-Mao periods, university students were a tiny, elite portion of the citizenry. Students' links with the ruling regime also weakened during these periods. In the Maoist and late post-Mao periods, these conditions did not exist. In the Mao era, students virtually disappeared as a separate social category. In the late post-Mao period, the commercialization and expansion of higher education diminished the formerly elite status of university students. Although in countries such as South Korea a mass tertiary education system has produced significant student activism, in China the massification of higher education has coincided with the almost complete disappearance of contentious collective action directed at or toward the polity. At least in part, in China this trajectory has been fueled by the intensified competition for jobs that has been the result of higher education expansion—a development that, when combined with the great opportunities for social mobility produced by rapid economic growth, has given students incentives to cultivate positive ties with the ruling regime and disincentives to challenge it.

In addition, in both the Republican and early post-Mao periods, divisions among ruling elites facilitated the emergence of student protest. This was especially true in the Republican period, which featured a weak state and many contending political powers. The more fluid political environment of the Republican era gave students less reason to fear political repression and greater opportunity and motivation to unite with other social groups. In the early post-Mao period, the relative strength of the state and comparative weakness of autonomous social groups—coupled with the developmentalist aims of the governing regime—presented students with the opportunity to protest, yet gave them little desire or ability to work with other social groups. As a result, although students in 1980s China acted as a vanguard force, without strong social allies, they were no match for the determined and quasi-totalitarian ruling regime.

Notes

1. Reflecting a still "socialist" mentality on the part of the political leadership, throughout the early post-Mao era, university tuition and fees were extremely low, such that financial concerns rarely deterred an admitted student from enrolling. Although wealthier families were able to put more resources into their youngsters' preparation for the national exam, and in some cases students with lower exam scores were allowed to enter university on a self-paying basis, in general, the early reform-era higher education system was based on merit, and not money.
2. Despite its more academic focus, the new version of the exam still includes an ideological component.
3. In 1978, for example, 5.7 million youths took the national university examination, but only .3 million (or 4.8 percent) were accepted into a four-year institution.
4. From 1979 to 1989, the number of university students rose from one to two million, while the total population increased from roughly 980 million to 1.12 billion.
5. Gorbachev's visit was the first official visit of a top Soviet leader since the Sino–Soviet split in 1959; thus, it was a particularly significant event.
6. Few of the casualties on June 4, 1989, were students. Virtually all of the dead and wounded were city residents who went into the streets to try to block the military from advancing to the city center. When the soldiers reached Tiananmen Square, they did not harm the roughly five thousand students who remained at the square.

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2 JAPAN: STUDENT ACTIVISM IN AN EMERGING DEMOCRACY

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While today we understand Japan as a postindustrial consolidated democracy, in the late 1940s Japan was an emerging democracy, shaking off the legacy of more than a decade of authoritarian and military rule and rebuilding a country devastated by a war it had brought upon itself. Within the group of Asian nations represented in this volume, Japan stands as the former invader and colonial overlord. However, after the end of the war, Japan itself lived under seven years of an American-dominated Allied Occupation (1945–52) that fundamentally reshaped its institutions and set it on a new course. Repositioning the development of student activism in postwar Japan in the context of an emerging democracy and developmentalism should facilitate comparisons with student activism in other Asian countries. Toward that end, this chapter details chronologically the phases of student activism in Japan, interlacing this history with changes in the structure and scale of higher education, in the array of allies and opponents among whom students engaged, in the international milieu, and in the changing political climate. Putting these developments in context, the chapter concludes that the political space and civil liberties available in postwar Japan have fundamentally shaped the forms and nature of student engagement.

Background and Context for the Postwar Student Movement

Marxist and socialist ideas inspired a modest amount of student activism at the elite imperial universities during Japan's first period of emerging democracy in the 1920s (Smith 1972), which took the form of social science study groups or organized activities in poor neighborhoods (called

"settlement" activity in Japanese). Student activism was suppressed by the early 1930s as a by-product of the repression of the underground Communist movement through use of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law, which made it illegal to participate in any group that advocated change in the economic system or the national polity. The very first target of the Peace Preservation Law was a social science study group at Kyoto University, and students also were caught in the subsequent mass arrests of various front organizations associated with the Communist movement in the late 1920s. The state studied carefully how students had become involved in the movement, and the criminal justice system soon began to demand that those arrested also recant their ideological commitments and organizational ties, a process known as *tenkō* (Steinhoff 1991). The repression and the demand for *tenkō* broadened in the late 1930s to encompass previously legal groups and activities, and campuses were steadily militarized. Students largely fell silent or were channeled into nationalism, and by the early 1940s, many students had been pressed into war industries and finally into military service. Yet university campuses still had many faculty role models who carried on the liberal intellectual tradition. As these professors came under attack by the state, students and faculty expressed their resistance in whatever ways remained available.

At that time there were a limited number of public and private universities in Japan; their faculties and student bodies made up a small intellectual elite who had ties to a wide range of social, economic, and political organizations and supplied the higher ranks of the state bureaucracy. Students reached this pinnacle through the narrow, competitive doorway of successive levels of secondary education. A small number of designated higher secondary schools served as preparatory schools for university admission, and a somewhat larger array of advanced special schools trained teachers and other skilled technical specialists. There were also some academic higher schools and tertiary institutions for women. Although the criteria for university admission were academic and meritocratic, the need for family support for these additional nonproductive years of study limited admission primarily to the sons of the elite and the small but growing middle class. As of 1940, in a Japanese population of more than 100 million, there were 81,999 students in nineteen national, two public, and twenty-six private universities recognized by the Japanese government (Ikeda 1970).

Student activism reemerged after the war under very different political, social, and economic conditions. The end of the war brought demobilization; students who had left school for military service returned to campus to join younger students who had entered during the last years of the war. Almost immediately after the Occupation began in the fall of 1945, students at higher schools and universities began organizing to demand the removal of wartime school administrators and the restoration of faculty who had been purged during the war. They also took up other locally relevant economic grievances (Yamanaka 1981). Three critical policies of the Occupation fundamentally reshaped the postwar environment for student activism: the legalization of the Left, the far-reaching civil liberties protections of the new constitution, and the restructuring of the education system.

One of the earliest moves of the Occupation was to abolish the Peace Preservation Law and free from prison the small number of members of the prewar Communist movement who had successfully resisted the state's *tenkō* demands. They were treated as heroes who had resisted the ultranationalist state at great personal cost. Both the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) became legal and legitimate players in postwar Japanese politics, enjoying constitutional protection, and during an initial honeymoon period they worked cooperatively with the Occupation authorities. Both political parties also resumed their prewar role of organizing Japanese labor unions, ironically now building upon the wartime corporatist government's mobilization of all workers into state-led mass organizations under the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Protected by strong new postwar labor laws, unions organized into national federations tied to the two political parties of the Left, building a tradition of labor unions in both the private and public sectors that extended well into white-collar levels. Union members were frequently mobilized to participate in political issue campaigns as well as to vote for the candidates of their respective political parties. The Japan Communist Party regarded students as one of its target populations for mobilization, along with workers, women, and minorities. It shaped the structure and scope of the postwar student movement, and the JCP exercised direct influence over the student movement until the late 1950s but had far less influence thereafter.

The second and perhaps most fundamental act of the Occupation was to bring about Japan's postwar peace constitution, which includes constitutional protections for academic freedom in addition to freedom

of speech, assembly, publication, and religion. It also incorporates strong women's rights, and it protects political organizations and the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively. The most remarkable element of the constitution is Article 9, which renounces the right to war. These rights were essentially handed to the Japanese people in a document largely written by the Occupation authorities, although procedurally the Japanese Diet, or parliament, approved the constitution. Although all of these provisions were written into the constitution, their meaning and application had to be settled in the courts in a process that continues to this day. The Japanese Left and its allies have become staunch defenders of the constitution because it protects their very existence. Students also have become involved in a wide range of issues and court cases based on their vigorous defense of what they perceive to be constitutional rights. During the peak periods of student activism from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, many constitutional questions were still slowly grinding through the courts, so the students felt very strongly that they were defending democracy and constitutional rights against illegitimate acts by the state.

The third key Occupation policy was the comprehensive structural reorganization of the Japanese education system. Japan had instituted universal primary education early in the Meiji era (1868–1912), and by the turn of the century most children had at least four years of primary schooling, which later expanded to six years. Beyond that base, the prewar education system branched off into many different tracks, most of which were dead ends designed to prepare students for various types of employment. There were private schools in addition to the public system, but in both the public and private systems, only one pathway led through the levels of advanced primary and higher secondary education required for entrance to university. Consequently, most students, regardless of their ability, were diverted into paths that could not possibly lead them to higher education. In 1946 the Occupation brought in American educational advisors, who recommended that the entire system be overhauled to a standard 6-3-3-4 system, with nine years of compulsory education, and that public education become fully coeducational. They recommended the restructuring of higher education into standard four-year universities, plus an array of two-year institutions offering terminal technical or associate degrees. The universities retained their existing internal European-style division into separate faculties, which are broader than American academic disciplinary departments. Law and

medicine remained four-year undergraduate degrees with subsequent practical training and licensing requirements.

At the time this system was implemented in the late 1940s, completion of middle school was a feasible goal for universal education. There was no entitlement of universal high school education, so entrance to both public and private high school continued to be based on competitive entrance examinations and there were far too few places for all students at the high school level. The old elite public higher schools were folded into an expanded higher education system, which provided at least one state-supported university in each prefecture, with access by competitive entrance examination open to students who had completed high school. As Japan's economic recovery began, this standardization of education at the primary and middle school levels produced much larger cohorts of students who were prepared to go on to high school, and in the absence of sufficient public high school space, new private high schools approved by the Ministry of Education began to fill the gap. By the 1960s, about 90 percent of Japanese students were graduating from high school, and the demand for higher education was growing rapidly. Many private high schools expanded into higher education to help meet the demand, but university entrance became more competitive even as it opened to a much broader range and number of students.

Postwar New Beginnings and the Development of Zengakuren

The postwar break provided a new legal and social context that was favorable to the development of student activism, and there was spontaneous organization and activism from the very beginning of the Occupation period. As students organized self-government institutions on their campuses, the newly legal Japan Communist Party (JCP) began working with students who shared their ideological orientation. The policy of the JCP at the time was to promote democracy and economic recovery. Student self-government organizations worked, with JCP support, to address the immediate needs of impoverished students by forming student cooperatives to provide food and low-cost supplies as well as to run student dormitories and student activities. The cooperatives were run by the student self-government associations to which all students belonged, which were supported by a portion of student fees that went directly to the organization. Students in each faculty of the university elected representatives to the student self-government

association. The JCP recruited student leaders at elite universities into youth organizations that were under the supervision of the party's labor section, and student leaders associated with the JCP soon came to control many of these campus self-government associations. They built city, regional, and national federations of student self-government associations along a Leninist model in which the elected representatives at each level elected the representatives to the next, higher level. The national level federation formed in 1948 and became well known as Zengakuren, which is a shortened form of the Japanese name for the All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Government Organizations.

As the Cold War began, the Occupation authorities became concerned about communist influence in Japan. After first purging the government of rightist leaders who had been involved in wartime policies and breaking up the largest economic conglomerates (zaibatsu) to increase competition, the Occupation changed direction and began a purge of communists in various sectors of the economy. In the education sector, the purge extended deeply into primary and secondary education, but it faced heavy resistance at the university level. The Occupation sponsored tours of Japanese universities in 1949 and 1950 by American educator Walter Eells, who advocated purging communist professors in the name of academic freedom. His visit set off large-scale student and faculty protests at several universities and was also controversial within the Occupation itself (Kumano 2007). Responses to the demand to purge communist faculty varied by campus, but in many places faculty and students together succeeded in preventing the removal of targeted faculty. Subsequently, strong student opposition prevented the government from passing legislation to assert control over the universities until the late 1960s. In the early 1950s—after a celebrated incident at the University of Tokyo, when police came on campus to arrest some students involved in a student dramatic performance—the universities were able to establish a policy that police would not enter campuses unless invited in by the administration.

At the national level, led by student leaders who were themselves affiliated with the JCP, Zengakuren took strong stands on a range of issues affecting students as well as more general political issues, but generally followed the party line. However, the JCP itself was criticized by Moscow in 1950, which exacerbated existing internal divisions between factions allied with Moscow or China. Thereafter, as the cold war continued, Zengakuren's position shifted periodically, reflecting the factional affiliations of the JCP leaders in the labor section who worked directly with the

Zengakuren leadership. The JCP and then Zengakuren took a short-lived and disastrous radical turn, mobilizing groups of students to go into the countryside during the summer of 1952 to try to foment a Chinese-style revolution. The failure of this experiment led to further soul searching and divided the Zengakuren leadership over the next several years, although they were still able to mobilize students nationally for some critical campaigns. At local and regional levels, student activism did not necessarily follow this top-down guidance. Students mobilized to pursue a wide variety of issues using the full range of modular social movement tactics available to them (Tilly 1995). They not only favored short-term student strikes for immediate campus issues, but they also used petition campaigns, rallies, and demonstrations regularly, along with more innovative cultural protests, such as street theater.

The Emergence of the New Left and the Long Protest Decade of the 1960s

Following the end of the Occupation in 1952, attention focused increasingly on the U.S.-Japan Joint Security Treaty, which authorized the continued presence of American military bases on Japanese soil. While there were many other international, national, and local issues about which students mobilized protest campaigns, the two peak periods of protest mobilization centered on the points at which the security treaty was opened for revision in 1960 and 1970. These protests are collectively referred to as 1960 Ampo and 1970 Ampo. More broadly, a shifting combination of Old Left (JCP) and New Left student organizations led student protests during the "long decade" of the 1960s, which stretched from 1957 through 1972, with two major peaks in 1960 and 1968–70.

By the mid-1950s, the JCP hegemony over the student movement began to dissolve with the emergence of a New Left that was still heavily Marxist but explicitly not affiliated with the Japan Communist Party. The largest component of the New Left came from a split within Zengakuren at the national level in 1958, when national student leaders who were also JCP members broke decisively with the JCP over a variety of policy issues and formed a separate organization called the Communist League (Kyōsanshugisha Dōmei), taking with them a substantial part of the student self-government organizations throughout the country. One part of their irreconcilable dispute with the JCP came over the proper theoretical role of students in society. The JCP insisted that students were simply a marginal arm of labor and made them subordinate to the general party

organization of the labor movement. The student leaders, as young intellectuals at Japan's top universities destined for national positions of leadership, articulated their position differently as constituting a special, separate subclass that stood between the state and labor. Despite the ideological division, the organization the students created, nicknamed "Bund," followed the Leninist organizational model and viewed itself at the national level as a vanguard political party directing the activities of an affiliated mass student organization with branches at universities. Since these same Bund leaders already occupied the top national leadership positions in Zengakuren, Bund soon took over control of the national Zengakuren leadership as the Mainstream faction, relegating the groups still allied with the JCP to an Anti-Mainstream faction.

A second New Left organization emerged at about the same time out of a small network of groups on various campuses studying the writings of Leon Trotsky. It grew rapidly and organized itself as a Leninist national party called the Revolutionary Communist League (Kakumeiteki Kyōsanshugisha Dōmei, or Kakkyōdō) with a mass organization of student branches on various campuses. Kakkyōdō wrested control of the Zengakuren Mainstream faction from Bund for a short while in 1958, but Bund soon regained control. A third New Left group, calling itself the Student Socialist League (Shakaishugi Gakusei Dōmei), had roots in an earlier group of Zengakuren leaders who had disagreed with the JCP and Zengakuren's radical turn in the early 1950s. (Despite their name, they were not affiliated with the Japan Socialist Party, which did not develop a New Left–oriented student organization until the late 1960s.)

A divided Zengakuren participated in the national committee that coordinated the massive 1960 Ampo protests, which brought opposition political parties, unions, grass-roots groups, and student organizations into the streets for a series of demonstrations protesting the Kishi government's attempts to get the revisions of the security treaty passed by the Japanese Diet. Although the students were part of the broad coalition, they often acted independently, using their own characteristic style of zig-zagging or snake-dancing street demonstration to confront the ill-prepared police forces, breaching barriers to penetrate symbolic targets such as the Diet compound. As opposition members of parliament boycotted the Diet sessions and the government's actions became more high-handed, street protests swelled with ordinary citizens who viewed the standoff as a critical test for Japan's fragile new democracy. In the end, the Kishi government rammed the revised security treaty through the

Diet with the opposition members absent. Although the Kishi government then fell (only to be replaced by another Liberal Democratic Party [LDP]–led conservative government) and Japan's democratic institutions survived, the students regarded the protests as a failure because they had not stopped the treaty's passage. They also compared it explicitly to the recent success of South Korean students in bringing down the government of Syngman Rhee.

For the next several years, the New Left student organizations engaged in extensive soul searching about why they had failed. During this period, Kakkyōdō split into two major factions—the Revolutionary Marxist Faction (Kakumaru-ha) and the Central Core Faction (Chūkaku-ha)—Bund also fell into factional disarray, and there was some movement of members and leaders between the New Left student organizations. No longer able to control the entire student movement, the JCP group established itself as another separate student organization called the Democratic Youth League (Minshūshugi Gakusei Jichikai Rengō, or Minsei). There was no longer a single, unified national student movement under the name Zengakuren, but several of the groups maintained their own national federations that they called Zengakuren. Each group developed a distinctive style and ideology within the broader Marxist canon that they shared, complete with new jargon created by the leaders to differentiate their key concepts from the others. They all continued to view themselves as comprehensive revolutionary parties leading their student followers toward a revolutionary future; as they developed their distinctive new frames, they applied them to formulate policy for dealing with each new issue that arose. All of the New Left groups were completely independent of the Japan Communist Party and ideologically to the left of the JCP and its student organization, Minsei.

Building on the model developed in the 1950s by the JCP-led Zengakuren, the New Left groups began to compete with the JCP-led Minsei group for control of the student self-government organization on each campus (or in each faculty at large universities). This was always a winner-take-all enterprise in which the slate of candidates from one organization obtained full control of the local level representative slots. Some faculties or campuses came to be completely dominated by one group, while at other places, the students from different organizations competed regularly for control of the official self-government organization with its lucrative fiscal base. Although the student organizations were in decline during the early 1960s, by the middle of the decade

they began to prepare for the next set of protests that would center on the 1970 security treaty revisions. As national organizations with a base of dues-paying members in campus chapters all over the country, they were able to develop infrastructure and rebuild their student base through a series of campaigns on different issues at the national and local level, including major student issues on particular campuses. Each organization supported a national office with paid staff and published a newspaper and other publications with national circulation. This infrastructure allowed the organizations to survive in abeyance until they could begin to mobilize students for a new round of protest campaigns in the late 1960s. The rise of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1966 also led to the development of some Maoist-inspired student groups in Japan, including ones linked at least peripherally to current or purged factions of the Japan Communist Party. Although the Cultural Revolution was a state-led movement in China, Japanese students saw its practice of public group criticism as a way to overcome traditional status barriers and directly confront professors and other people in power. Student groups that were not Maoist ideologically also adopted protest tactics from the Cultural Revolution—such as mass bargaining with university administrators, who were held hostage in public meetings until they broke down and met student demands.

The Escalation of Violence in the Late 1960s and Its Impact

The protest cycle of the late 1960s and early 1970s was far more complex and multilayered than the basically single-issue 1960 Ampo campaign. The key issue in the impending 1970 revision of the security treaty was the return of Okinawa to Japanese control after more than twenty years of American occupation and whether it would continue to host U.S. military bases after reversion. The security treaty also had pulled Japan into a supporting role in the Vietnam War because the U.S. bases in Japan were being used as rear staging areas for the conflict. The LDP government was firmly committed to the U.S. side, although much of the Japanese population either favored strict neutrality or sympathized with the North Vietnamese and the North-supplied Viet Cong as a revolutionary, anticolonial movement. Hence opposition to the Vietnam War was a potent political issue, inextricably tied to the antibase issue and opposition to the security treaty with the United States. Several environmental pollution issues also had reached a national audience, and these were in turn

tied to opposition to the conservative government's strong promotion of business interests at the expense of the people's health and welfare. The Left in general and the student New Left in particular were increasingly sensitive to minority groups in Japan, whose claims the state chose to ignore. Although there still was a loose coalition of labor unions, opposition political parties, and other civil society organizations that engaged in protest demonstrations about many of the same issues, by the late 1960s the students often operated independently. Because of continuing conflict and competition among the student organizations, they could sometimes cooperate on joint operations, while at other times they staged independent protests over the same issues on the same days in the same cities. This had the additional consequence of dividing police resources among several different but simultaneous protest events.

In addition to national and international issues about which students protested in the streets, there were growing conflicts on university campuses over issues such as fiscal mismanagement and fee increases at private institutions, and dissatisfaction with educational practices and autocratic administrative policies at tradition-bound public universities. By the second half of the 1960s, the postwar baby boom was reaching college age, and by then more than 95 percent of all Japanese students graduated from high school. Japan had completed its postwar recovery and had entered the boom that would propel it into the ranks of the top industrialized nations. In addition to a massive rural-to-urban shift in the population, the occupational structure was expanding the number of middle-class, white-collar jobs needed to manage this new economy, fueling increased demand for a college education among a much broader segment of the society. The increase was met largely by the expansion of admissions in private institutions, many of which simply accepted thousands more students than they could actually accommodate in their classrooms. The national and public universities were not expanding in size, but they offered high status and low tuition, producing extreme competition on the university administered entrance examinations. Since there was virtually no provision for students to transfer from one institution to another and retain their academic credits, students who failed to get into the university of their choice—or any university at all—had little choice but to study for another year and try again.

This led in turn to the commercialization and expansion of supplementary education, in the form of cram schools that were not accredited

and did not offer degrees, but simply offered courses to help students prepare for the entrance examinations. The result was that there were not only many more students attending universities in Japan's major cities, but there was also a secondary pool of aspiring students who had finished high school and were taking an additional year or two to try to pass the entrance exams, either by studying on their own or by attending a cram school. The competition for college entrance was compounded as students with one or two extra years of post–high school training competed for limited positions with new graduates. Ironically, the emphasis on entrance examinations had long since created a culture in which students who had been admitted to a university enjoyed a relatively free pass for the next four years, during which they did not need to study much in order to remain in school, but were encouraged to enjoy their time before settling down to the discipline of a secure full-time job. The vast majority of students lived either in dormitories or in cheap student housing, far from their families and free to spend their time as they wished. In the late 1960s there were fifty-two universities in Tokyo alone, providing safe campus staging areas for a huge pool of students with free time to engage in protest activities.

Freed from the rigors of memorizing facts for the entrance examinations, university students read widely in the vast array of political literature that was available in Japanese at prices students could afford. In a postwar environment with virtually no publication censorship, this included Japanese translations of the entire Marxist canon, plus contemporary debates among Japanese intellectuals that mirrored all the flavors of Western and Asian Marxism and added new Japanese variants. In addition, the contemporary anticolonial and third world revolutionary literature appeared in Japanese translation shortly after its original publication in English, French, or Spanish. Students followed world events in the Japanese national mass media and smaller journals of the Left, and they identified with student protests and revolutionary movements all over the globe. The students participated in the much broader counterhegemonic discourse of the Japanese Left, but added their own distinctive contributions through both New Left organizations and individual publications.

During the early 1960s, when the student movement was in abeyance, the state had increased its resources for controlling protest with a much-expanded riot police force, strengthened special police units dedicated to investigating potential antisubversive activities, and more plain clothes police to conduct surveillance of political organizations, including some

student groups. Although there certainly were many large, peaceful street demonstrations in Japan in the late 1960s, there was also steady escalation of violence in street clashes between police and student demonstrators. By late 1968, student street demonstrations in Japan had become violent confrontations in which helmeted, stone-throwing students wielding wooden poles and throwing Molotov cocktails battled police in full riot gear who used water cannons laced with tear gas to disperse them. Police used an aggressive style of policing that is now called escalated force (McCarthy, McPhail, and Crist 1999; della Porta and Reiter 1998; McPhail, Schweingruber, and McCarthy 1998), but they basically controlled protests through massive police presence and nonlethal weaponry. While the various New Left groups—now factionalized and called sects—continued to organize and lead the off-campus street protests over national and international issues, nonaffiliated students became regular participants in these demonstrations as well.

On the campuses, students mobilized to confront the administration by staging indefinite strikes and occupying campus buildings. A new form of organization emerged out of these local issue protests on campuses, called the All-Campus Struggle Committee, or Zenkyōtō. At a mass campus rally in which all students were free to participate and debate, all those present voted on how to proceed, as a form of mass participatory democracy. Demands and actions would proceed in the name of the campus Zenkyōtō, which would elect a leadership committee and self-organize to occupy buildings and carry out the necessary administration of daily living as well as any other protest-related duties. Of course, on campuses with strong representation of the New Left sect organizations, these well-organized groups took a prominent role in the all-campus organizational process as well. In the campus context, where all were equally students, they were sometimes able to share power with members of other New Left sects by occupying different buildings or different floors of one building. While administrators at private institutions were quick to call in the riot police to remove them, faculty and administrators at the elite national universities were reluctant to break with tradition by calling in the police, causing many conflicts to drag on for months before the campuses were finally cleared. In the interim, students had free access to campus facilities from which they also could prepare for street demonstrations on other issues. It was in this context that the government was finally able to pass a University Control Law in 1969 allowing the Ministry of Education to step in when the university

administration could not bring an end to a campus conflict. Because of the confluence of the on-campus Zenkyōtō movement with the array of national and international issues that were concurrently bringing students into the streets to protest, a relatively high proportion of all college students had some experience of participation in protest activity during the late 1960s. Campus life was thoroughly dominated by student activism, and normal academic activity was frequently ignored, even when it was not actually shut down by protests.

Until mid-1968, in the face of widespread public protests against the policies of the conservative LDP government, police controlled street protests with escalated force tactics and surveillance of particular student organizations. Since they were part of much wider opposition movements that included major opposition political parties and labor union federations, students were not singled out until the fall of 1968, when the steady escalation of violence in clashes between New Left student groups and police led to a decline in public support for the students' confrontational tactics. At that point the cabinet secretariat commissioned two successive national opinion polls that showed a sharp decline in support for student protest.

In the face of rising violence and diminishing public support for the students, the state cracked down with mass arrests of students at protest events both on campus and on the streets. State officials quietly began holding the arrested students indefinitely instead of the previous practice of releasing them within a day or two, and they pressed formal charges whenever possible. When they realized what was happening, supporters of the New Left students organized a new system to provide immediate support to arrested students and helped them organize trial support groups so they could continue their resistance as the conflict moved from the streets into the courts (Steinhoff 1999). The conflict continued to escalate for another year, but by 1970, after 162 universities across the country had been engulfed in serious campus strikes, the wave of violence finally began to subside. Street protests continued to be violent for another year, but with smaller numbers of participants because of the high expectation of violent confrontations between protesters and police.

Despite the escalating violence, the peak period of New Left student protest in the late 1960s also gave birth to a wide array of cultural and social innovations, including thousands of small publications and new cultural expressions in experimental theater, literature, film, and visual

arts. Students also developed new forms of self-organized groups to meet their needs, including cooperative underground bookstores as distribution outlets for their publications; the trial support system to protect arrested activists; and small groups to study issues, promote particular causes, or publish their ideas. Collectively, these activities constituted a New Left culture that was informal, egalitarian, and democratic, in explicit contrast to the hierarchy and formality of traditional Japanese institutions and the hierarchical Leninist structures of the national New Left student organizations themselves.

In the late 1960s Japanese students borrowed tactical innovations and some ideology from the Chinese Cultural Revolution, but were even more closely attuned to student activism in the West and to revolutionary activity in other parts of the third world. They shared ideology as well as many parallel issues, and they used many of the same forms of protest, either because these forms had become modular and virtually universal or because of direct borrowing. In support of the January 1969 campus protest at the University of Tokyo, students from all over Japan flocked to the Kanda bookstore district near the campus and manned a street barricade, in imitation of the street barricades used by French students the previous year. International gatherings of student activists in Tokyo in 1968 and 1969 brought Japanese activists into direct contact with student movement leaders from the United States and Europe, and there was even an effort to coordinate an early campaign of the Red Army Faction in Japan with the Chicago Days of Rage (Steinhoff 1991). Japanese student activists read the same books as their counterparts elsewhere and closely followed what was happening in other parts of the world. In part, what the radical wing of the Japanese New Left was trying to do was import third world revolutionary tactics to Japan. The relations were often mutual or parallel. The Red Army Faction in Germany actually adopted its name from the Red Army Faction in Japan. Subsequently people from both groups were linked through their common affiliation with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, from whom they received guerrilla training in Lebanon.

The pattern of student conflict in Japan closely paralleled that in the United States and Europe during the same years (Zwerman, della Porta, and Steinhoff 2000). Aggressive policing brought an apparent end to the student protest cycle of the late 1960s and early 1970s. While the majority of student protesters withdrew from activity, a smaller fraction of the movement was pushed underground or into exile, where they engaged

in an even more violent activity and were harder to apprehend, despite even greater police focus on the smaller number of invisible actors. In both Japan and the United States, this led to a new cycle of resistance characterized by extreme activity by former student activists who went underground or into exile and continuing legal social movement activity through trial support for activists on trial and in prison (Zwerman and Steinhoff 2005). Japan experienced a series of attacks and bombings by underground activists in the early 1970s, and it has had low-level intermittent activity since then. In the wake of the campus protests of the late 1960s, many campuses disbanded their student self-government organizations, and the level of student activism has never regained its momentum. Both the JCP-led Minsei and some factions of the New Left organizations of the 1960s still exist, but with vastly reduced numbers and resources. Several still publish newspapers and have a presence on some university campuses, but the bulk of their participants are aging veterans of the protests of the 1960s.

The Legacy of the Protest Cycle of the Late 1960s to Early 1970s

As in the United States and Europe, the protest cycle of the late 1960s and early 1970s gave birth to a host of second order social movements during the 1970s and 1980s that were generally less violent. They were led by those who had participated in the student protests of the 1960s and continued their activism as adults. The student generations that experienced the 1960- and 1970-era protests have been marked indelibly by that experience. They continue to participate in higher numbers in all sorts of social and political activism in civil society. In Japan, part of what they took away from the violent protests of the late 1960s was that they could not succeed by confronting the state directly and that the large-scale, hierarchical protest organization was not an effective vehicle for social change in the face of an entrenched, powerful conservative government. Instead, they have used the smaller innovations of the New Left culture, such as new forms of organization, new forms of minimedia, and alternative public spheres, together with old and new forms of protest, to build an invisible civil society. This invisible alternative civil society contains thousands of tiny, fragile informal organizations that freely form and disband but are linked together horizontally through personal and organizational networks that enable them on occasion to mobilize large

numbers of people for protest events at which they can suddenly become visible to the larger society.

There have been several short periods of increased protest activity over particular issues since the late 1980s in which rallies and street demonstrations have included contingents of students along with other civil society groups (Steinhoff 2006). There are some signs of increased interest in student activism by Japanese young people today, and some efforts to attract young people through the use of new cultural protest styles, such as "sound demos" that use contemporary music and a livelier march pace instead of the traditional chants of the older demonstration style. Some demonstrations combine both, with the older style being used for one segment of the street demonstration by older people, and a separate contingent of students and young people at the rear using musical instruments and a disc jockey on a sound truck to create a livelier atmosphere.

From the beginning, student activism in Japan has gone beyond campus issues to engage the major political issues of the day. Campus protests also have always been part of the equation, but they have never been the sole or dominant aspect of student activism. As a result, student activism has always been connected to actors in other sectors of civil and political society who are engaged in the same protest movements. The early close connection of the Japanese student movement to the Japan Communist Party linked it to the structure by which opposition political parties were connected to major labor union federations. By the time of the long protest decade of the 1960s, even though only a fraction of the student movement was still connected to the Japan Communist Party, other parts of the movement had ties to the Japan Socialist Party and also continued to have direct and indirect links to labor union federations. In the major protest demonstrations at both ends of the long decade, student activism was frequently coordinated with rallies and demonstrations by opposition political parties, labor unions, and other civil society groups. This linkage can still be seen today in the smaller and less frequent rallies and street demonstrations sponsored by various groups on the Left.

During the late 1960s, with considerable financial support from the Japan Socialist Party, student activists became actively engaged in building antiwar organizations out of small groups of young laborers who worked for nonunionized small companies. These initiatives helped to create a community union movement that is now part of the invisible civil society. Former student activists often lead these unions composed

of people who work for different small companies and join the union individually, in order to obtain some of the collective benefits of Japanese labor law. In another perspective on this issue, the Japanese labor movement was very strong during the 1950s and 1960s when the two major opposition parties dominated it. As in many other countries, labor has grown weaker since the 1970s, and in the late 1980s a merger of Japanese union federations ended up weakening and further splitting what had been some of the strongest public sector unions. Government restructuring and the breakup of the national railways further contributed to these tendencies. Thus, the ties that currently exist are between a much weaker and smaller labor sector and a much weaker and smaller student movement sector.

It also should be added that in large companies and the public sector, unions in Japan extend well into white-collar occupations, and many former students activists have become members and leaders of such unions, as well as becoming labor lawyers. The leaders of the 1960 Ampo protests were sought after by business and even government as potential leaders, but leaders of the more complex and violent 1970 protest generation were largely marginalized and excluded from large companies and from government positions. The student protest movement of the late 1960s ardently defended the constitution but rejected conventional electoral politics because the students' experience had demonstrated that even legal Left political parties with strong backing from union federations and representation in the national Diet could not overcome the hegemonic power of the conservative LDP and thus could not change the direction of national policy. Consequently, there has been relatively little movement of former student activists into elective politics at the national level, except for some who went into the opposition parties, but there is considerably more movement by former student activists into local-level political positions, such as city council seats, since there is much more opposition control of local city politics. After veering sharply in a neoconservative, neoliberal direction for a decade, the LDP finally lost control of the government after more than fifty years with the decisive August 2009 victory of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The DPJ is a product of electoral changes and party realignments in the 1990s that produced a new centrist party containing both disaffected former LDP politicians and a large chunk of the former Socialist Party. As such, it already contains some elected politicians who have ties to civil society groups on the left that in turn carry some of the New Left legacy. There

has been a resurgence of both student activism and civil society activism in general since the massive earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster of March 2011.

At the same time, the excesses of the protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s did long-term damage to student autonomy and self-government at universities and also to public attitudes toward student activism. The kinds of university reform issues that students sought to bring about in the late 1960s have in most cases still not really been changed. Many university reform plans were put forward in the 1970s, but little actually happened on the issues students were rebelling against. There has been some curricular reform and innovation since the 1990s, but much of it has been accomplished by starting something new in a new institutional context, while leaving the old system in place. Police management of protest has moved away from escalated force toward negotiated management to some extent, but the Japanese police continue to use intrusive personal surveillance and harassment arrests to discourage activism, and the criminal justice system has become steadily more punitive since the 1960s, in part as a result of interactions between the New Left trial support system and the criminal justice system (Steinhoff 2010).

Conclusion: Japanese Student Protest as Provocative but Protected

The contrast between prewar and postwar Japanese student activism is fundamentally about the difference in regime type and prevailing laws. Prewar Japanese student activism labored under the same type of repression that has characterized the situation in most other Asian countries at various times. It also should be pointed out that the law that constrained student protest in Korea during most of the postwar period was in fact the Korean version of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law that repressed student activism in prewar Japan, which came to Korea during the Japanese colonial occupation. The postwar Japanese constitution—with its wide array of civil liberties protections including academic freedom, plus basic protection for labor unions and political organizations—undergirds postwar Japanese student activism.

The postwar Japanese student movement of the 1960s was definitely a vanguard, with students acting qua students with a strong collective identity, which they had theorized as a separate subclass in Marxian terms. They were supported by strong, institutionalized organizations created by and for themselves. They constituted an intellectual elite, and they

were also to some extent a moral force. Yet they did not operate in a vacuum. Their movements were coordinated alongside labor and other civil society groups, although students also acted independently and did not follow the scripts of other groups. They were living in a developmental state, but under the highly unusual condition of a preestablished constitutional democracy that had been created by the Allied Occupation.

This chapter argues that early postwar Japanese student activism is best understood as arising in the context of an emerging democracy. As late as the 1960 Ampo protests, the protesters themselves viewed the issue as protection of the fragile institutions of their new democracy. Since that time, laws, regulations, and court decisions have limited some protest activities, but the basic protections that enable student activism have become firmly institutionalized as Japanese democracy has consolidated over the past half century. There have been repeated attempts to limit the ability of students to engage in activism through measures to control the universities. Student activists were able to resist and prevent such laws until the late 1960s, and even the law that was finally passed simply allowed the state to intervene in campus conflicts if the university was unable to control them after several months (Pempel 1975). Student activists in postwar Japan have always been well aware of the importance of their constitutional protections and quick to defend them against any incursions by the state. Although they readily engage in street protest, they also utilize the courts fully to assert and protect their rights (Steinhoff 2010, 2013). Postwar Japan thus stands in contrast to most other states in the region: while Japan was a developmental state and an emerging democracy during the 1950s and 1960s, it already had in place democratic institutions and strong civil liberties protections for dissent by virtue of the Occupation-imposed constitution. The New Left wave and democratization were fused in the long decade of the 1960s, when student activism peaked. While the Liberal Democratic Party's long rule was conservative and often high-handed, it was neither so authoritarian nor so corrupt as the military regimes and dictatorships in other countries in Pacific Asia. And when the long hegemony of the LDP ended in 2009, it was through a normal democratic election in which students played virtually no part.

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3 HONG KONG: PROBLEMS OF IDENTITY AND INDEPENDENCE

STEPHAN ORTMANN

On June 4, 2009, tens of thousands, perhaps up to 150,000 people, attended a candlelight vigil in Hong Kong in remembrance of the violent crackdown on student protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square twenty years earlier. The Hong Kong student movement, which also had participated in solidarity protests in 1989, was a leading organizer of the memorial. In addition to the vigil, eleven student activists conducted a sixty-four-hour hunger strike. Two months earlier, in April 2009, students of the Hong Kong University Student Union had voted 92.6 percent in favor of a motion demanding that Beijing vindicate the 1989 protest movement and hold accountable those responsible for the crackdown. While this outburst of activism demonstrates that student activism is still relevant in contemporary Hong Kong, it also is sobering to know that fewer than 20 percent of the members of the student union participated in the vote. Many students are apathetic or afraid of politics as Leo Yau, a university student and member of the Young Civics (the youth wing of a prodemocracy political party), realized when he wanted to talk about what happened on June 4, 1989. He remarked: "When I tried to talk to my classmates about it, most didn't care" (Yin 2009).

The history of Hong Kong student movements demonstrates that collective identities are a crucial variable in understanding the rise and fall of student activism. This chapter argues that two interrelated identity problems have shaped student movements in Hong Kong. First, there is the changing identity of students themselves. Students were only regarded—and regarded themselves—as an independent strategic group for a very short period of time between the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s. After this, while student activists still continued to participate in politics, they increasingly aligned themselves with other

political groups that shared their interests. The diminishing power of student identity resulted from the increasing openness of the political system, the massification of higher education, and a persistent apathy fueled by a prevailing sense of powerlessness.

Second, Hong Kong's territorial identity as an autonomous but not independent entity led to divisions within the student movement, which manifested in a split into two distinctive camps and significantly weakened the organizational capacity of the movement. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the most vocal student activists believed that the most important goal was unification with the mainland. A faction of the student movement, however, believed in reforming the colonial government and demanded improvements to the lives of Hong Kongers. Once the former group lost its interest in politics after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the importance of student activism declined. The hope of a united democratic China reignited massive student activism in 1989, but the violent crackdown by the Chinese government that year quickly demoralized students once more. Since then, activist students have been closely aligned with the democracy movement and their identity has been closely linked to prodemocracy groups in Hong Kong politics. It is, therefore, not surprising that students played a leading role in the massive July 1 protests that called for democratic reform in 2003 and 2004. They were, however, embedded within a much larger societal context and cannot easily be separated from the other political groups that joined the student activists in the antigovernment mobilizations. Even though some observers saw a return of a more active student movement, this period was rather ephemeral, and today students are again perceived to be unwilling to participate in politics.

The Origins of Student Activism in Hong Kong

The student movement in Hong Kong can be traced almost to the beginnings of the first university. Only one year after the Hong Kong University (HKU) was established in 1911 to educate future bureaucrats, the Hong Kong University Union was founded. Renamed the Hong Kong University Students' Union, the group was registered as an independent student-run organization in 1949. Three years later, in 1954, the students published their first edition of the *Undergrad*, a student newspaper that emphasized social issues and was instrumental in the mobilization of like-minded students during the 1970s and the diffusion of student

activist groups' viewpoints. The Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), an umbrella organization that includes many different student groups from various universities, was founded in 1958 and was the leading voice of the student movement during the 1970s. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Hong Kong University dominated the higher education sector until the Chinese University of Hong Kong was founded in 1963. Today, Hong Kong has seven public and two private universities. The student body also has grown dramatically. While in the 1970s less than 2 percent of the population was fortunate enough to study at a university, in 2004 approximately 18 percent of those between the ages of 17 and 21, or 70,139 people, were enrolled in Hong Kong's tertiary institutions (Moy 2004). Hong Kong's system of higher education has undergone significant massification.

Since becoming a British colony in the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, Hong Kong has developed into a semiautonomous territory with its own legal system, its own currency, and an almost autonomous administration. In the early years, the colony was ruled by an authoritarian regime dominated by expatriate bureaucrats who administered the colony mainly based on security concerns. Social matters were left largely to Chinese neighborhood organizations. With the end of World War II and the general trend toward decolonization, the Hong Kong government also started a slow process of localization in the civil administration. A plan to partially democratize Hong Kong was, however, shelved in 1952 (Tsang 1988). Instead, the colonial government insisted that it could become democratic, or at least responsive to the people, by introducing consultative bodies that would ascertain what the public wanted. Furthermore, the government nominated people who it viewed as representative of certain sections of the population to government institutions. A growing emphasis on social policy during the 1970s changed the character of the Hong Kong government, which increasingly became integrated into the society (e.g., through its new role in providing public housing). Limited democratic reforms in the early 1980s and 1990s increased the ability of Hong Kongers to participate in politics, but the colonial government failed to institutionalize a fully democratic system (Thomas 1999).

The unusual political circumstances in Hong Kong provided a distinctive social environment in which student activism was later to arise. The end of the civil war in China in 1950, with the victory of the Communists and the retreat of the Nationalists to Taiwan, had caused thousands of

Chinese to flee the mainland and find refuge in Hong Kong. This influx created a massive population increase and had a great impact on the political culture of the city-state. Those who had fled, it was claimed, wanted a peaceful life and thus avoided politics. This attitude was labeled the "refugee mentality" of the Hong Kongers and was considered one reason for the depoliticization of the citizenry (King 1975). Students who participated in protest activities in the 1970s were thus mostly from those families who had been born and bred in Hong Kong. As the city-state's youth grew attached to their environment, they also became increasingly interested in the social and political affairs of their community.

In common with many of the other cases studied in this book, student activism during the early 1970s filled a vacuum that had arisen as the result of the widespread depoliticization of the population. This depoliticization had, however, unlike in other Pacific Asian states, not been the outcome of the concerted efforts of a developmental state. Rather, it was influenced by the widely held belief that political contention would lead to destructive unrest. This belief arose after two major riots, in 1966 and 1967. The first of the two riots was the result of economic difficulties and was triggered by a rise of ticket prices of the Star Ferry Company.[1] The second riot, which occurred only one year later, originated during a labor dispute in March 1967 and turned violent in May when police clashed with demonstrators who were trying to break into a factory; it ended with bombings of various targets at the end of the year, which were probably perpetrated by communist activists. The 1967 disturbances were also closely linked to leftist political groups, such as the Federation of Trade Unions.[2] However, there was little public support for the protesters and rioters. Most political groups in Hong Kong sided with the government, reinforcing the notion that public demonstrations potentially threatened the stability of the colony. The willingness of the students to stage demonstrations in subsequent years, therefore, positioned them as vanguards of protest. Seeing themselves as a moral voice of the community, the students placed themselves at the forefront of Hong Kong's society. Benjamin K. P. Leung therefore argues that the student movement was "a forerunner and a facilitating factor in the transition to a democratic society in Hong Kong" (2000, 210).

Significant student activism began to take shape in the early 1960s when some students of the Hong Kong College Students' Social Service Team, a student group that was interested in social issues and

united eighty to one hundred students from various tertiary institutions, became concerned with the state of poor people in the colony (Lam 2003). However, their activity remained very limited. This changed after the 1967 riots, even though most student activists, like other Hong Kongers, were opposed to the rioters. The government, however, concluded that the riots were the result of a lack of communication between itself and the community, and it thus introduced new feedback channels, such as the City District Officer (CDO) scheme in 1968. This new openness provided student activists with a crucial opportunity to challenge the government, or as Jane A. Margold (2000, 6) argues, "for university students, the 1967 uprising was a point of awakening." The first important activity of the new student activism occurred in 1969, when sixty activists from the student unions of Hong Kong's two universities joined students from Chu Hai College to conduct a two-day sit-in in front of the latter school to protest against the dismissal of twelve students for their critical comments about the college's administration in the student newspaper. Students from other tertiary institutions, such as the Hong Kong Baptist College (which became Hong Kong Baptist University in 1994), also supported the movement (Leung 2000).

Anticolonial concerns motivated the students to propagate their version of Chinese nationalism. The activists found their target in the language policy of the colony, which favored English and gave no official place for Chinese. To mobilize fellow students, seventeen activists set up a special committee to make Chinese an official language in 1970. On September 19, 1970, they organized a peaceful protest in which more than five hundred people participated (Scott 1989, 111). At the time, English was used in the courts, and the students argued that ordinary people who did not speak the language were unable to properly defend themselves (Wong 1971).[3] The government finally accepted the demands of the protesters when it elevated Chinese to the status of an official language of the city-state with the Official Languages Act of 1974. Ian Scott notes that "had it not been for student agitation, it seems unlikely the changes would have been made" (1989, 112). The crucial role of the students at the time allows us to classify them as a strategic group (Thompson 2009). Relying on protest tactics, they were successful not only in challenging the government, but also in bringing about significant institutional change.

Hong Kong's status as a British colony until 1997 greatly influenced the student movement during the 1970s. Students across Asia often have promoted nationalist causes, and Hong Kong is no exception.

What distinguishes Hong Kong's student movement in the early 1970s from that of other anticolonial Asian student movements is the fact that students did not aim for independence of the state in which they lived but instead demanded unification with a much larger state, the People's Republic of China. A spokesperson of the Hong Kong Federation of Students proclaimed in the February 17, 1972, edition of the *South China Morning Post*: "To be Hong Kong–born Chinese and not just Chinese poses an embarrassment to us, and a problem to be solved." At this time, the student activists were more or less united in their demand for unification with the mainland. They also shared this goal with other leftist pro-China groups, such as the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, but they were the only ones willing to demonstrate in favor of unification.

An important event heightening the nationalist orientation of the students was the 1971 protests against the U.S. decision to return the Senkaku Islands (known in Chinese as the Diaoyutai Islands) to Japan. When the American government returned sovereignty of a number of the islands in the East China Sea located between Taiwan and Okinawa to Japan in 1970, it infuriated many student activists who strongly believed that these islands rightfully belonged to China. In particular, the Diaoyutai Islands became the focus of activists aiming to "save" the islands. When the HKFS requested permission to protest on this issue at Victoria Park in Causeway Bay on July 7, 1971, the government was opposed. Still sensitive in the aftermath of the 1967 riots, the government tried to prevent the protest. Activists were split over whether to ignore this decision and conduct the protest anyway. In the end, some student groups, such as the Hong Kong University Students' Union, refused to participate, while others, such as the Hong Kong Defend the Diaoyutai Action Committee, went ahead with the rally, which mobilized six thousand people (not only students, but also other members of the public). The reaction of the police was harsh, with officers beating and arresting twenty-five students (Lam 2004). Leung (2000, 214–15) argues that the government's reaction resulted in a reorientation of the student movement, which subsequently began to increasingly target the Hong Kong government. However, it would be wrong to overinterpret the significance of the crackdown; not only had the students anticipated the government's reaction, but also their anticolonial rhetoric had already led them to oppose the government. Nevertheless, the harsh treatment of the protesters allowed activists interested in social issues to somewhat reorient the focus of the campaign and increasingly press the Hong Kong

government for political changes. The majority of the activist students, however, remained convinced that the solution to all social problems could not be achieved through reform of the political system, but rather through unification with the Chinese mainland (Margold 2000).

Identity Problems and the First Split of the Student Movement

While at the beginning of the 1970s the students seemed to be united in a single movement, identity problems soon led to a split of the movement into two factions within the HKFS. During the early period, most student activists were motivated by nationalism, calling for the eventual decolonization of the city-state and its return to the Chinese motherland. Not only did they advocate more intimate relations with China, but they also organized many study trips to the mainland. However, it did not take long before many of the student activists also became interested in issues of local governance. As this occurred, some students began to form alliances with other societal actors. Early signs of a rift could be seen in the students' "manifesto," a political statement signed by approximately forty students representing various student unions. While it made its case for unification, it simultaneously called for the reform of what was considered an unjust and outdated social system, according to a February 17, 1972, article in the *South China Morning Post*. A campaign against corruption in 1973 brought students together with other activists. The trigger for the movement was the disappearance of Peter Fitzroy Godber, a police chief superintendent who was accused of corruption and had escaped to Great Britain. This affair caused a strong negative reaction from the press, which severely criticized the government. In turn, the government appointed Alastair Blair-Kerr, a well-known judge, to form a commission in order to investigate the reasons for the disappearance and make suggestions about how to defeat corruption. Despite the swift response from the authorities, a large number of the population voiced their dissatisfaction with the government. More than sixty civil society groups demanded the separation of the anticorruption office from the police force and the formation of an independent agency. The protests involved university students from the HKFS—who, even though they were not the primary leaders of the movement, still provided rhetorical ammunition for the activists (Lam 2004). When the government finally announced the establishment of the Independent Commission against

Corruption (ICAC) in 1974, the students could perhaps celebrate their last great victory.

The question over Hong Kong's identity, however, contributed to a prevailing sense of powerlessness among many students as well as to the development of factions within student ranks. The student movement was split into an ideological faction that was mainly interested in the unification of Hong Kong with China and sympathized with the communists on the mainland and another more pragmatic faction that was primarily concerned with improving the lives of average Hong Kongers. Leung (2000) has called these the pro-China and the social-actionist factions, respectively. The two factions were united in their assumption that protesting was necessary for change. The leftist pro-China faction most actively promoted nationalist causes that included the promotion of Chinese language and protests against Japan. The moderate social-actionist faction was more interested in social issues, such as price increases or public housing. The conflict came into the open in 1974 during an anti-inflation campaign. While pro-China students organized an exhibit aimed at linking the capitalist system practiced in Hong Kong to rising inflation, the social-actionist faction instead stood outside of the exhibition hall and distributed flyers in opposition to the exhibition because the group considered the activity merely an act of propaganda and not an attempt to help the people of Hong Kong (Leung 2000). While the movement was ideologically split, it still operated within a unified organization, namely the Hong Kong Federation of Students, the leadership of which was mostly dominated by the pro-China faction.

The heightened level of protest activity in the 1970s raised the question of whether Hong Kong resembled its neighbors in Pacific Asia, many of which were experiencing growing student unrest. In this context, Peter M. Whyte, the dean of students at Hong Kong University, argued in a November 26, 1975, interview with *The Star*, a liberal tabloid paper, that "Hong Kong has heard scarcely a murmur of dissent from its undergraduates." Whyte claimed that the reasons for the lack of activism were the role of the traditional Chinese family and a sense of powerlessness among students. Furthermore, because more than half of the students at the time were from the poor parts of the population, most of them were pragmatic and focused on their careers. Student activism in the early 1970s had grown, Whyte admitted, but the number of activists remained small. In his interview with *The Star*, he estimated the number of politically active students on the campus of the Hong Kong University to be

only about 5 percent of the total enrollment. In fact, Whyte's estimate closely resembles the level of participation in other countries, including those that were seen as hotbeds of student radicalism.

The pro-China faction lost its appeal after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Members of the pro-China faction had supported the Gang of Four and became disillusioned when they were put on trial. The social activists then took control of the movement. They, however, lacked a strong collective identity or strong ideological reasoning, as their primary interests were instead social issues such as public housing for the poor. While there were important protests at the end of the 1970s, student activists increasingly became absorbed into various social movements during the 1980s. Overall, student activism declined.

The last major activity in which students played an important role was a protest that was planned in 1979 in support of the so-called Yaumati boat people, a group of Chinese refugees who lived in boats at the Yaumati typhoon shelter and who wanted to receive housing from the government. The protesters were arrested while they were riding in coaches on their way to petition the governor. In the end, eleven activists were found guilty of participating in an illegal assembly; four of them were student activists and the others were an Italian Catholic priest, five social workers, and a doctor. The government again arrested some students when they demonstrated in support of the protesters (Chan 1979). While the protests in 1979 show that students were still involved in social movements, they also demonstrate that the politically active students were no longer able to mobilize significant numbers. The student leaders had turned toward other social activists and the general public for support, reducing the significance of students as an independent group in mobilization. When new channels of participation were introduced in the 1980s, these bodies reduced the need to resort to protest activity. Finally, the growing student population made it much more difficult to find common ground. While in the early 1970s students had seen themselves as the conscience of the society, this rapidly changed in the latter half of the 1970s. As has been argued in the introductory chapter, the massification of the university system, reflected in the mushrooming of tertiary institutions and the tremendous increase of the student population, had the result that students no longer saw themselves as a strategic group. Their sense of identity as students was seriously weakened.

The Resurgence of Student Activism in 1989 and the Democracy Movement

The mobilization capability of student activists rapidly changed again in 1989 as a result of growing student protests across mainland China. In the People's Republic, students held a vigil for the deceased Hu Yaobang on April 15, the reformist one-time leader of the Chinese Communist Party, who had been deposed two years earlier. They demanded political reforms and an end to widespread corruption (see chapter 1 in this volume). Many students in Hong Kong sympathized with their fellow students in Beijing. Not only were they hoping for a democratic future on the mainland, but they also thought that a democratic China would make unification more seamless. On May 4, more than three thousand students from fourteen different tertiary institutions demonstrated in support of the Tiananmen protests near the legislative council. The students were organized by the leaders of the Hong Kong Federation of Students and the student unions from various universities (Tsoi 1997). By May 17, 1989, the group of students willing to protest had already swelled to around eight thousand. After this rally, student leaders delivered a petition signed by eighty thousand people to the Xinhua News Agency, then the unofficial diplomatic representation of the People's Republic of China in the colony, demanding that the Chinese government negotiate with the student leaders (Cottrell 1989).

On the face of it, this movement suggested a break with past traditions, when leftist students had identified with the Maoist government in Beijing; deeper down there was continuity because the Hong Kong students continued to identify with developments in China. A number of students even decided to go to Beijing to participate in the student demonstrations there. On May 23, they joined their fellow students in Beijing. For this purpose, they used money that had been raised by the Hong Kong Federation of Students over the years. The head of the federation, Andrew To, personally went to Tiananmen Square to express his solidarity with the movement; when he returned to Hong Kong, he organized hunger strikes and marches in sympathy with the protesters. At the square, the Hong Kong activists met Chinese student leaders and discussed plans and tactics on how to proceed. Furthermore, they provided the students with financial and material support, which included food, blankets, and sleeping bags. Dingxin Zhao (2001) even asserts that if the Hong Kong students had not supported the Beijing student movement,

it could have resulted in serious financial problems for the Tiananmen protests. A very small number of Hong Kong students even remained in Beijing until June 4, the day of the massacre (Cheung 2004).

Similarly to in the 1970s, but in contrast to the student movement in Beijing, student leaders in Hong Kong decided to cooperate with other political groups very early on. On May 20, 1989, student leaders allowed the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, a newly founded pressure group, to be at the forefront of the movement. This was the day the Chinese government declared martial law in Beijing. Despite an approaching typhoon, approximately forty thousand people participated in a protest in Hong Kong—the largest public demonstration in more than twenty years. The next day, the demonstration increased to between five hundred thousand and a million people, many of whom shouted patriotic slogans and demanded the resignation of China's premier, Li Peng. Even the staff of the Xinhua News Agency voiced support for the democracy movement in Beijing. After May 21, a number of large-scale protests followed (Cottrell 1989).

In addition to student groups, the alliance also included 228 groups, among them labor groups, religious groups, civil service groups, women's groups, and others. Szeto Wah and Martin Lee, two longtime social activists, took the lead. After the June 4 massacre, the alliance raised $1.2 million to help dissident students who had fled Beijing (Sharma 1989). The group collected the names of those who had died or been injured in the hope of helping their families. However, threats from Beijing soon endangered this alliance. For instance, a teachers' organization withdrew because it was fearful of angering Beijing (Tyson 1989). Finally, the *People's Daily* accused the alliance of having the intention to overthrow the Chinese government (Wilhelm 1989).

After the massacre at Tiananmen Square, Hong Kong, like much of the rest of the world, was shocked by the events. Thousands of people participated in a huge demonstration mourning the victims. The most immediate result was disenchantment and even anger among many Hong Kong students toward the Chinese government. While they had been enthusiastic about China's transformation before 1989, the students now became worried about the future of democracy both in China and in Hong Kong. The massacre raised existential fears for Hong Kong and the viability of the one-country, two-systems concept that was scheduled to come into effect after reunification in 1997. As a consequence, the stock market dropped by 25 percent and Hong Kong faced the threat of a major

exodus. In order to restore confidence to Hong Kong, the Office of Members of the Legislative and Executive Council (OMELCO) initiated the "Hong Kong Is Our Home" campaign, which asked the British government to grant Hong Kongers the right of full British citizenship (Carroll 2007). While this proposal was rejected, the British government negotiated with the Chinese government about a slow increase in the pace of democratization in Hong Kong. In 1995, the number of directly elected seats on the Legislative Council (LegCo) was set to twenty out of sixty, the same as the Hong Kong Basic Law stipulated for the post-1997 LegCo.

This Tiananmen-era revival of the student movement ebbed as quickly as it had appeared. Even in 1989, some student leaders believed that the level of activism was not as high as it could have been. In hindsight, Andrew To asserted in an April 12, 2009, interview in the *South China Morning Post*, "In 1989, [Hong Kong] university students were not as active as many expected [them to be]." Moreover, memories and interpretations of the Tiananmen events also changed over the years for some students. While in 1989 students had demonstrated unity in response to the growing political activism in Beijing and in other Chinese cities, in later years some students began to openly question the relevance of the massacre or even whether it had happened at all. Some even started to accept the official justification of the Chinese government and blamed the students for the crackdown. This skepticism was in part due to the fact that especially after 1997 many students from the mainland enrolled at Hong Kong universities and in part due to the fact that many Hong Kong schools do not teach what happened in 1989 because of fears that doing so could anger the Chinese government (Yin 2009).

In the years immediately before and after the handover in 1997, problems over identification with China became even greater. For instance, in 1993, as a response to increasing attempts of the Hong Kong Federation of Students to mobilize for democratization, pro-Beijing students established the Hong Kong Youth and Tertiary Students Association (HKYTSA) to compete with the federation. Although the group was officially politically neutral, the leaders of the HKYTSA were and still are closely aligned to pro-China groups in Hong Kong, such as the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB). This signified a return of the split that was already visible during the 1970s. Now, however, there also was an organizational division, which meant that the two student groups would have to compete for members. The new organization officially proclaimed itself to be more conservative and less willing to

participate in protests, especially those deemed illegal by the government. Members do not necessarily join because they share the group's political agenda, though. Rather, they may join for incentives such as the international student identity card, model United Nations program, exchange tours with the mainland, and discounts at various locations. The association's president in 2000, Yau Yuen-yick, voiced the group's stance on recent demonstrations by five student leaders against a rise in tuition fees in a November 2000 article in the *South China Morning Post*: "Students do have their right to protest, but other people also have their right to enjoy stability and peace in society." Suggesting that protests could lead to mayhem and chaos, Yau argued that mass demonstrations were not legitimate. By the early 2000s, the Hong Kong Youth and Tertiary Students Association was the second largest student organization, with twenty-six thousand members (HKYTSA homepage 2010), while the Hong Kong Federation of Students had more than fifty thousand members (Kwok 2000).

After 1997: Student Mobilization against Article 23

A small core of only about thirty student activists remained the driving force behind student activism after 1989. These activists organized protests on many different issues ranging from campus-related problems, such as fee increases, to demands for greater democracy, though they rarely managed to mobilize large numbers. However, eventually these student activists became the forerunner of and a driving force behind massive antigovernment protests mainly against antisubversion legislation. These protests peaked in 2003 and 2004.[4] The most active student activists were members of the Hong Kong Federation of Students, though they cooperated with prodemocracy groups. These groups, which have attracted a substantial following, originated in the pressure group movement of the 1970s. Prodemocracy parties regularly and successfully contest Legislative Council elections. However, the institutional setting—only half of the Legislative Council members are elected by popular vote—forces prodemocracy groups to remain a permanent opposition (Lau and Kuan 2000). Unlike in Indonesia and South Korea, students as a group were not the leading force of the democracy movement in Hong Kong, instead aligning themselves with other prodemocracy groups and trying to mobilize the whole population for their cause.

After the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, prodemocracy student leaders took an increasingly confrontational stance against the

government. They demanded full democracy and were willing to disregard "unjust" legislation to draw attention to their cause. They conducted unregistered protests that flaunted the Public Order Ordinance, which requires that all protests be registered with the police department and is a holdover from the colonial administration. Contrary to other semi-authoritarian states, such as Singapore, the government rarely denied protesters the permission to demonstrate: between July 1997 and 2002, only five public meetings were prohibited and only five applications for a so-called "permit of no objection" before public marches were denied. The student activists, however, justified their refusal to register their protests by asserting that this provision was undemocratic.

Eventually, the government decided that it needed to take a harder line against the students. In 2002, the government arrested three people, two of them student leaders, for an illegal protest. Also arrested was the head of the April Fifth Action Group, a radical socialist group within the prodemocracy camp, which demonstrates how closely student activists were collaborating with other civil society groups. During the trial, opposition against the government's actions grew. On May 11, 2002, more than 140 people demonstrated against the arrests, also not registering their protest and defending their action in terms of the right to defy unjust laws. The Hong Kong Federation of Students also printed and distributed ten thousand copies of a booklet titled *My Sassy Ordinance*, which aimed to inform fellow students of the problems with the Public Order Ordinance (Ng 2002). The government, however, ignored the demands of the activists and convicted the three activists.

While the government made an example of the three activists, it also refrained from arresting other people. This mix resembles a similar strategy to what in the Singapore context has been called *calibrated coercion* (George 2007). To a certain extent, it seemed to work. Because the arrests of student activists highlighted the perils of political activism, they probably contributed to the still prevalent depoliticization on campus, a situation that was only interrupted by the colony-wide protests of 2003 and 2004.

The massive protests of 2003 and 2004 targeted what became popularly known simply as Article 23. When Tung Chee Hwa proposed antisubversion legislation as required by Article 23 of the Basic Law in 2002, many Hong Kongers felt threatened. The law was published in 2003 as the National Security (Legislative Provision) Act and contained various provisions concerning treason, subversion, secession, and sedition.

Many people were convinced that the proposal would severely restrict their political freedoms, which had become closely linked with Hong Kong's identity as an autonomous territory. For instance, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) was concerned about the freedom of expression that could be curtailed under the sections dealing with sedition and theft of state secrets (2003).

A number of student activists were among those mobilizing other people to protest against the law. For the first time in years, activists now found it easy to motivate their fellow students, who were otherwise considered largely apathetic and disinterested in politics. On July 1, 2000, a small group of student activists from the Hong Kong Federation of Students organized a protest demanding the popular election of the Legislative and Executive Councils and the chief executive. Around 3,700 protesters participated, most of them members of various interest groups. Already in 2000, students called for the resignation of the chief executive, Tung Chee Hwa, but they admitted that this demand was mainly a tool to generate attention for the movement. Siu Yu-kwan of the Hong Kong Federation of Students asserted in a July 14, 2000, article in the *South China Morning Post*, "We did not really want Tung to step down. What we really want is a referendum to change the nomination and election of the Chief Executive and the councils. We want everything to be done by the Hong Kong people, not the mainland government." This statement illustrates that by this time the prodemocracy student activists had developed a strong Hong Kong identity. Unlike in the past, when students strongly identified with the People's Republic of China, now they were trying to assert the collective rights of the Hong Kong people *against* the Chinese government.

However, this development also hampered the emergence of a collective student identity, as the various student groups aligned themselves with either the prodemocracy or the pro-China camp in Hong Kong politics. Even so, a study of the turnout in the July 1 protests in 2003 and 2004 confirms the significance of students in these protests. Of those participating in the two protests, 20.9 percent of five hundred thousand and 18 percent of two hundred thousand, respectively, were students (Chan and Lee 2005). In contrast, a democracy rally on January 1, 2004, which drew approximately one hundred thousand people, was made up of only approximately 9.8 percent students (Chan and Lee 2005). These findings suggest an important new trend: students were crucial actors in Hong Kong's new democracy movements, but only as part of a larger collective.

Similarly to in the 1970s, the government was willing to concede to the demands of the protesters, and the security law was scrapped in September 2003. Continuing public pressure forced the unpopular Tung Chee Hwa to resign from office in 2005. He was replaced by Donald Tsang, who started off with considerable public support. However, the government did not expand avenues for participation. When the government postponed the scheduled 2008 direct elections of the chief executive and Legislative Council to 2017 and 2020, respectively, somewhere between seven thousand (official numbers) and twenty-two thousand (claim of the organizers) protesters showed their displeasure with the government (Monahan 2008). Though significant, these protests were smaller than those of a few years earlier; it seemed that many Hong Kongers had lost interest in protesting for democracy. The government's concessions had certainly weakened the democracy movement that now lacked a unifying enemy and was increasingly divided over tactics and goals.

Although a substantial number of students participated in the 2003 and 2004 protests, disagreements among them continued to weaken the movement's organizational capabilities. The general student body lacked a consensus in terms of general goals, including democratization. In this context, it is important to note that even though the Hong Kong University Students' Union (HKUSU) participated in the mobilization of the 2004 protests, its external affairs secretary, Tse Chi-hang, was not convinced of the need to have direct elections by 2007. Deep-seated divisions appeared mainly over whether to prioritize political issues, such as democratization, or focus on student affairs. In 2006, the HKUSU initiated a referendum on whether to leave the Hong Kong Federation of Students after complaints from students that the federation was internally divided and contributed very little to society. Some students also asserted that the federation had lost some autonomy because it was working closely with other civil society groups and thus neglected the interests of students. Even though the referendum was declared void because only 9.78 percent of its members had voted, almost half of those who voted favored leaving the union.

In 2009, controversy over the Tiananmen crackdown again revealed rifts within the student body, as well as the development of a more conservative pro-China leadership on certain campuses, reflecting the growing influence of the Chinese government over its special administrative territory. The head of the Hong Kong University Students' Union, Ayo Chan, asserted that students could have averted the bloody crackdown in 1989

if they had peacefully retreated from the square. Chan also supported a referendum about the significance of the 1989 events and whether the crackdown should be called a massacre or an incident. He wanted to place the events of 1989 in historical perspective in order to bridge the differences among the students and further the goal of democratization. When students voted, a clear majority (92.6 percent) was in favor of a motion calling for the Chinese government to admit responsibility for the massacre and to release all remaining dissidents. However, fewer than 20 percent of the members participated in the referendum (Chan 2010). Another member of the student union, Christina Chan, started a petition calling for a no-confidence vote on the president. On April 17, 2009, Ayo Chan became the first leader of the student union to be ousted from his position. The incident, however, gave rise to allegations that the Chinese government was trying to subvert the student movement, according to a May 21, 2009, article in the *World Tribune*. While support for democracy remains high and demands for the Chinese government to apologize for the Tiananmen massacre continue, the pro-China faction is slowly gaining influence on the campuses, as a result of two factors: the local media and the education system are faced with growing pressures from the Chinese government to present its view, and there is a rapidly growing mainland Chinese presence both off and on campus. For instance between 2003 and 2009, the number of postgraduate students from China has increased from one third to 50 percent (Jacobs 2009).

While the student movement leadership is still deeply divided into pro-China and prodemocracy factions, most students continue to be uninterested in politics and thus rarely participate in protest activities. A related organizational weakness is a gap between the leaders and their base. A number of students have publicly voiced their unhappiness that leaders of the movement have participated in the democracy movement at the expense of narrower student concerns. Remzi Wu, a student and political activist within the Civic Party, asserted that "[student] unions have to gain their members' trust first, perhaps by letting them know they are concerned about students' welfare" (Fung 2008, 2). This concern is reflective of a larger weakening of the democracy movement, which increasingly is beset by various problems such as internal divisions, difficulty of recruitment, and lack of resources (Cheng 2008).

Meanwhile in the 1990s and the 2000s, there was a boom in higher education. While in 1989 only 4.8 percent of the population over fifteen years of age had received tertiary education, this number increased to

more than 20 percent by 2002 (Moy 2004). The attendant growth of the student population has further weakened student identity. Students now have greater difficulty in finding common ground than they did in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, this increase forced student organizations to involve themselves more in the mundane affairs of daily student life and become responsible for a growing number of administrative tasks. As a consequence, student organizations became increasingly bureaucratized and it became more difficult for leaders to organize members for protest activities. Finally, the increase in the number of graduates has made it more difficult to find adequate job opportunities upon graduation. According to student activists, involvement in student union activity tends to have a negative impact on academic performance (Hiraga 1996). For this reason, most students focus on their studies and internships instead of participating in university politics.

Conclusion: Identity and the Limits of Student Activism

Unlike in many other states in Southeast and Northeast Asia, Hong Kong's students have not played a crucial role in the political development of the state. Behind the students' weak role there are two identity problems. First, the students' territorial identity always has been very complicated due to Hong Kong's colonial history and its complex relationship with China. Second, the decline in the collective identity of students as an independent strategic group since the mid-1970s is another reason for the lack of importance of the student movement.

Even though students did not significantly influence political development, they did play an important role at three junctures. First, they can be seen as the forerunners of the democracy movement in the 1970s, when they took the role of a vanguard because other pressure groups were still depoliticized. A major impetus of student activism during the 1970s was the students' nationalist aspirations that demanded decolonization and return of Hong Kong to the Chinese motherland. However, not all students shared this nationalistic zeal. Instead, they demanded reforms to the political system in Hong Kong. The disagreements led to the first major split within the student movement into two factions, a pro-China nationalist faction and a social reform faction.

The national question became an issue again in 1989 when students were hoping for unification with a democratic China and cooperated closely with their fellow students in Beijing. The violent crackdown disillusioned

the youngsters and created perhaps the greatest identity problem in the history of the city-state. Many Hong Kongers were worried about the future of the city after unification and thus pushed more actively for democratization. Activist students joined the prodemocracy movement in Hong Kong, while student leaders who disagreed with the movement established their own groups that were more closely aligned with the pro-China faction in the territory's politics. Students were significant for a third time when they mobilized in large numbers during the 2002 and 2003 protests. Subsequently, however, disagreements about issues such as whether to call the events of June 4, 1989, a massacre or an incident continued to plague and divide the student body.

While questions of territorial identity repeatedly divided the students, the fracturing of student identity since the mid-1970s also has undermined the impact of student activism. The declining salience of the student collective identity occurred for many reasons, including the increasing openness of the political system. With this change, pressure groups became an important part of the political system, creating more venues for political participation and thus reducing the significance of student activism. The massification of the university system, which included increases in both the number of tertiary institutions and of the student population, had a similar effect, undermining students' perception of themselves as a special or privileged group.

Early on, students were able to celebrate some victories, such as the introduction of Chinese as an official language and the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), both in 1974. Students in Hong Kong, unlike in some other Asian countries, also cooperated with other political groups from the very beginning. This cooperation helped student activists pursue their goals, but it diminished the role of students as an independent strategic group. Soon, the student activists also raised social issues relating to the Hong Kong government, which eventually led to a split into a pro-China faction and a social-actionist faction. However, the latter did not have a strong ideological basis, and once the former was discredited after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, student activists worked more closely with other social activists. The increasing avenues for participation resulting from slow-but-steady democratization allowed students to become members of myriad social movements. This process peaked in the massive 2003 and 2004 democratization protests when—in stark contrast to cases like South Korea or Indonesia—students were important participants but not a leading force.

Notes

1. For detailed analysis of the 1966 riots, see Scott 1989, 82–96.
2. For detailed analysis of the 1967 riots, see Scott 1989, 99–106; Wong 2001.
3. The issue, however, was not new: it had been hotly debated in the only half-elected institution in the colony, the Urban Council, after the 1966 riots. (Even though the Urban Council played an important role for opposition politics, its functions were limited to such tasks as hosting cultural activities, maintaining parks, and street cleaning.)
4. It should be noted that there are still annual July 1 demonstrations, but they do not draw as many people as during these two years.

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4 TAIWAN: RESISTING CONTROL OF CAMPUS AND POLITY

TERESA WRIGHT

Relative to other Asian countries, the character and influence of student activism in Taiwan is somewhat unusual. First, student activism in Taiwan never has had a significant leftist or developmentalist phase. Further, although students in Taiwan, as in China and Indonesia, at times have identified themselves as a "pure" and "moral" force with a special, protected role as remonstrators of the polity, in Taiwan students have not been at the forefront of the democracy movement. Although student protests have been influential, in general, when students have engaged in collective contention, they have done so in response to regime-initiated political liberalization, and they have tended to follow the lead of other prodemocracy social forces. In this regard, student activism in Taiwan has been more similar to that in the Philippines than in Burma, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, or Thailand. At the same time, the student movement in Taiwan has been more focused on campus-level reform than has been the case in most other Asian countries, with the possible exception of mainland China. As in other Asian countries, student activism in Taiwan is part of the larger story of the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. In addition, Taiwan's struggle for democracy has had quasi-nationalist or anticolonial features. Further, as in Malaysia and Indonesia, in Taiwan the struggle for democracy has been intertwined with conflict between demographic groups with distinct identities.

This chapter begins with this sociopolitical context, as it provides the backdrop that frames Taiwan's student involvement. The chapter then considers two other key factors that have structured student activism: Taiwan's global status and its campus life. Subsequently, the chapter turns to a chronological analysis of that engagement. Finally, it delves

more deeply into the nature of students' links with other social groups, a key facet that both charts Taiwanese student activists' agendas and distinguishes these students from regional counterparts.

Explaining the Rise and Character of Student Activism in Taiwan: Sociopolitical Context

For a substantial portion of the 1600s, Taiwan was a Dutch colony. During this period, many mainland Chinese (both ethnic Han and Hakka) moved from southeastern China to Taiwan, such that the island's aboriginal population (of Austronesian ethnicity) became vastly outnumbered. In the late 1600s, the Dutch were driven off Taiwan by mainland Chinese forces, and the island fell under Ming, and later Qing, dynastic rule. Following China's loss in the Sino–Japanese War in 1895, Taiwan became a Japanese colony. After Japan's surrender in 1945, at the end of World War II, the island again returned to Chinese control. At this point, Taiwan came to be ruled by China's governing party, the Kuomintang (KMT) as part of the Republic of China (ROC).

The Han and Hakka residents of Taiwan, whose families by this time had resided on the island for centuries and who spoke primarily Taiwanese, initially rejoiced at the end of Japanese colonial rule. However, conflict soon emerged between the island's preexisting residents—who viewed themselves as Taiwan natives (*benshengren*)—and the island's new mainlander rulers, who spoke Mandarin and were seen by the Taiwanese as outsiders (*waishengren*). The conflict was fed by the mass flight of mainlanders to Taiwan following the KMT's loss of the mainland to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the late 1940s. By 1949, roughly 85 percent of Taiwan's population identified themselves as Taiwanese; the other 15 percent were mainlanders.[1] Making matters worse for the Taiwanese, the KMT, led by Chiang Kai-shek, believed that its war with the mainland Communists had not ceased. Asserting that the government of the Republic of China was only temporarily relocating to Taiwan, the KMT added a series of "temporary provisions" to the constitution that it had brought from the mainland. These provisions suspended many political rights and gave the president of the Republic (Chiang Kai-shek) extraordinary powers. Representatives to the National Assembly (Guomin Dahui), who had been elected in 1947 from each of China's provinces and could choose the president, were frozen in place until the mainland could be retaken. Most members of the lower legislative

house, the Legislative Yuan (Lifayuan), also were exempt from reelection. In 1949, martial law was imposed. In addition, under KMT rule the official language in Taiwan became Mandarin; all political posts required fluency, and school instruction and university entrance exams were in Mandarin. Further, ROC identity cards and passports indicated whether or not a Taiwan resident's place of family origin (*benji*) was Taiwan.

Taiwan's path toward democratization was intimately shaped by the struggle for political representation and equality on the part of the Taiwanese. In the late 1970s, non-KMT (*dangwai*) Taiwanese activists began to publish journals and support candidates for political office. In 1977, a *dangwai* candidate ran in and won a local election in the southern (and predominately Taiwanese) city of Chung-li. Riots broke out after ruling authorities purportedly tampered with the election results. By late 1979, *dangwai* organization and activism had mushroomed, culminating in a large-scale demonstration organized by the opposition journal *Formosa*. In the face of such pressures, in 1980, the KMT added new supplementary seats for electoral competition in the National Assembly and other representative bodies and reduced its own discretion over campaign activities (Cheng 1989, 486).[2] In early 1986, the KMT announced further reforms, including greater protection of civil liberties. New national policies allowing for increased freedom of the press led to the rise of many new periodicals and less-restricted news coverage in existing media outlets. By the late 1980s, non-KMT newspapers and journals enjoyed legal circulation and a small but substantial readership. Still, virtually all major newspapers, as well as radio and television stations, remained under KMT control through the early 1990s (Lee 1993).

In September of 1986, *dangwai* activists announced the formation of Taiwan's first official (though still technically illegal) opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Instead of suppressing it, Chiang Ching-kuo (who had become president of the ROC in 1978, following the 1975 death of his father, Chiang Kai-shek) recognized the new party. In July 1987, martial law officially was revoked, and the rights of public speech and gathering were guaranteed (though procommunist and pro-Taiwan independence demands remained punishable as treason). Further, in 1984, Lee Teng-hui—a KMT leader of Taiwanese rather than mainland descent—had become vice president. When Chiang Ching-kuo died in January of 1988, Taiwan for the first time was ruled by a Taiwanese (albeit still KMT) president.

In 1990, large-scale protests on the part of the DPP and students (more on these in the discussion that follows) pressed for direct popular election of the president and full democratization of Taiwan's political system. At least in part due to these collective actions, democratizing reforms ensued. The National Assembly was completely reelected in late 1991, while the Legislative Yuan resolved to abolish the "temporary provisions" in the spring of 1991 and was itself wholly reelected in 1992. In 1996, Taiwan held its first direct presidential election, won by incumbent Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui. In the next election, in 2000, Taiwanese DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian assumed Taiwan's highest political office, marking the first democratic alternation of political power in Taiwan's history.

In Taiwan, the rise and success of the *dangwai* movement and the DPP filled the vacuum that in other countries led students to act as a vanguard activist force. As noted in the introduction to this volume, "when other political leaders are available and deemed competent, students will be less inclined or required to play a vanguardist role; while structure alone is never determinative, a paucity of educated, competent leaders or the stifling of other regime opponents helps to propel students to take the initiative." Yet even though the vitality of the *dangwai*/DPP movement undercut the need for students to take a leading role in pressing for the island's democratization, students in Taiwan at times have mobilized consciously as students and been an influential force for political reform. Perhaps most significantly, students have taken an active leadership role in pressing for democratization and freedom on Taiwan's college campuses, which were subject to strict KMT political controls for most of Taiwan's post–World War II period, and thus were an important site of political contestation.

In addition, student activism clearly has been related to changes in the governing regime and media controls. With each step toward greater domestic liberalization and democratization in the 1980s and 1990s, student activism grew. Since the completion of Taiwan's democratic transition in the early 1990s, student activism has waned. Even so, students have continued to take to the streets when the island's relatively newly established democratic system has been perceived to be under threat, and their collective actions have continued to be colored by tensions between mainlander and Taiwanese sentiments.

External Context

Concurrent with Taiwan's shifting domestic sociopolitical context, extra-island events and Taiwan's global status have influenced the character of student activism. Although Taiwan never experienced a truly anticolonial or nationalist social movement, its struggle for democracy shares some key features with this kind of struggle. For at the core, it was a conflict between two groups: an authoritarian and repressive government composed of a minority group that came from outside and a majority "native" group. Moreover, the arrival of the KMT-affiliated outsiders occurred immediately on the heels of the native population's achievement of independence from Japanese colonial rule. The native group at this time had expected democratization, but quickly it was subjected to a new form of political control and discrimination at the hands of the new mainlander KMT rulers. Of course, what distinguishes Taiwan's situation from that of other colonized territories is that, in this case, the outsiders did not view themselves as colonizers, but rather as the unifiers of a China that had been wrongly divided by Japanese colonizers. While recognizing this rather unique feature of Taiwan's political history, the conflict between the Taiwanese and mainlanders that has characterized Taiwan's struggle for democratization clearly has been at least quasi anticolonial in nature.

At the same time, because both the KMT rulers of Taiwan (the ROC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership of mainland China (the People's Republic of China, or PRC) viewed one another as archenemies throughout most of the post–World War II period, left-leaning (and especially openly communist) ideas and activism on Taiwan have been subject to severe repression at the hands of the KMT. Moreover, when the KMT fled to Taiwan in the late 1940s, large numbers of anticommunist mainlander professors and students came to the island and dominated Taiwan's universities (Wu, Chen, and Wu 1989, 125). Continual threats to the security of Taiwan made by the CCP in the post–World War II period also have diminished the appeal of communism within the Taiwanese population. Thus, the unique circumstances of Taiwan have worked against the emergence of a truly leftist wave of student activism.

Changes in Taiwan's global status also are key in explaining the emergence of both the broader democracy movement and the student movement. Prior to the early 1970s, the ROC was recognized by the United States and other world powers as the legitimate political leadership of

China. Thus, the KMT felt little international pressure to engage in political reform and moved swiftly and decisively to crush any budding dissent. When Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations and derecognized by the United States and other leading world powers in the 1970s, the KMT became much more vulnerable. Simultaneously, the political normalization and economic modernization of the PRC that began in the late 1970s undercut the KMT's ability to portray the ROC as the modern and humane alternative to Communist rule. Increased democratic pressures in neighboring South Korea and the Philippines only worsened matters for the KMT, as did human rights criticisms from the United States.[3] These extra-island factors were key in spurring KMT leader Chiang Ching-kuo to accede to politically liberalizing moves in the 1980s, including naming Taiwanese Lee Teng-hui vice president, recognizing the DPP, and abolishing martial law. Had Chiang not felt vulnerable internationally, the regime-directed political activism in which students joined other opposition forces likely would have been suppressed in the 1980s, just as it had been in the 1940s–70s.

In the spring of 1989, student protests in mainland China further facilitated the rise of collective action in Taiwan. The Tiananmen Square movement received widespread and favorable coverage in Taiwan, with great contrasts made between the oppressive mainland Communist government and its benevolent counterpart across the Taiwan Straits. This series of events bolstered the ROC's international legitimacy, yet at the same time it raised pressure on the KMT to continue its liberalization process and to treat street demonstrations with tolerance and respect.

Campus Context

Alongside these external and island-wide sociopolitical factors, student activism in Taiwan has been shaped by campus-level realities and developments. At Taiwan's universities, strict KMT political controls over student expression and association stifled student activism, yet it also engendered deep political dissatisfaction—particularly among Taiwanese students, who were the majority of students as the post–World War II period progressed. In part, this shift occurred as the initial cohort of mostly mainlander students graduated. Of perhaps greater importance, though, in the 1960s, the KMT leadership dramatically expanded Taiwan's higher education system, with the result that the number of university students increased more than fivefold (Wang 2003, 262). Although

mainlander applicants still retained an advantage in admissions due to their greater fluency in Mandarin, the number of self-identified Taiwanese students skyrocketed: they made up an overwhelming proportion of the population, and hence the applicant pool. Moreover, by the 1960s Taiwanese applicants had become more fluent in Mandarin than had been the case in the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, as time passed, the percentage of Taiwanese college students rose dramatically.

Prior to the 1990s, university students, especially those who identified as Taiwanese, had great cause for dissatisfaction with their campus-level experience. The mainlander-dominated KMT permeated and controlled not only university students' education but also their daily lives. Through the early 1990s, the KMT-controlled Ministry of Education designated key administrative figures, such as university presidents. In Taiwan's most prestigious institutions, such as National Taiwan University (NTU), the ministry typically consulted with top KMT leaders before making such choices. Via the same mechanisms, the KMT centrally dictated curricular content and admissions quotas (Epstein and Kuo 1991, 182; Deng 1990, 4). Further, students were tested on KMT ideology in national college entrance exams, and they were required to continue this study in their undergraduate years (Epstein and Kuo 1991, 190). Through the 1980s, each student was assigned to a KMT-affiliated counselor (*jiaoguan*) who lived with the students in the dormitory and kept close tabs on their actions and behavior. In addition, each class of students typically contained a student who was a long-devoted KMT member. These "class spies" were responsible for scouting prospective recruits and for keeping an ear to the ground for anti-KMT opinions and activities. Concomitantly, students were allowed to form organizations only under the sponsorship and oversight of the KMT. At all universities, the student government chair was chosen with no direct participation of the student body; instead, school authorities and/or KMT-sponsored student groups monopolized the selection process. Further, any flyer or publication to appear on campus had to be submitted for prior review by a KMT-dominated screening committee (Deng 1990, 4). When students contested these restrictions on their campus freedom, their actions were inherently political and directed at Taiwan's KMT-led ruling regime.

These campus-level KMT controls simultaneously incensed students and bred fear among them. Given the KMT's penetration of students' daily activities, it was extremely difficult to act without detection. Further, the consequences of being caught were quite severe. Entrance to a university

in Taiwan was restricted, requiring high scores in the national university entrance exam. Expulsion would result in the eternal loss of this hard-earned and coveted position. A student who was expelled faced immense difficulty in gaining acceptance to a different university, as changes in institution generally were not allowed (Epstein and Kuo 1991, 190–93). At universities such as NTU, students were expelled if they received three "large demerits," which could be meted out for errant political behavior. Further, for male university students, an imperfect political record typically led to an undesirable posting and a low rank during their mandatory two-year military service. Similarly, black marks on a student's university record could severely restrict his or her future career possibilities. Thus, those students who dared to protest did so in an atmosphere of substantial risk. Consequently, through the early 1980s, students became involved in political protest only as tangential participants in nonstudent dissident groups that enjoyed a greater aura of safety.

A Chronology of Student Activism

As noted earlier, student protest in Taiwan differs from that in many other Asian countries in that it never has had a clear leftist or developmentalist phase. Even so, students have participated in many collective political actions aimed at democratizing and liberalizing Taiwan's KMT-dominated political structures, which through the early 1990s included the island's higher education system. Further, this struggle has had a quasi anticolonial character, featuring the quest by the Taiwanese to achieve political equality and representation as well as freedom of expression and association. Apart from campus-level protests, however, students have played only supporting roles in political protests; even when they participated enthusiastically and distinguished themselves from party-based allies, their engagement off-campus can be understood only as a part of broader developments.

Off-Campus Struggles from the Late 1940s to the Late 1970s

The most prominent, sustained, and contentious protest movement of Taiwan's early post–World War II period had clear nationalist or anticolonial features. On February 27, 1947, KMT forces confiscated from a local Taiwanese woman the contraband cigarettes that she was peddling in Taipei. When the woman resisted, a KMT officer shot into the crowd

that had formed, and an official KMT vehicle was burned. The next morning (February 28), a large crowd assembled in downtown Taipei. Demonstrators took over the island's radio station, and some attacked a branch of the KMT's monopoly bureau (in charge of items such as cigarettes), burning the building and beating the officials therein. Two of these officials were killed, and four were seriously injured. For the next three weeks, acts of violence against Chinese mainlanders spread through Taipei and other major cities. The KMT responded with force. By March 21, up to eight thousand people (both Taiwanese and mainlanders) had been killed (Lai, Myers, and Wei, 8, 105).

These actions, which became known as the February 28 (Er-Er-Ba) movement, were urban-based; Taiwan's rural residents were not involved. The protestors included unemployed individuals, white-collar professionals, and possibly members of Taiwan's local underworld (Lai, Myers, and Wei 1991, 6). Some university students participated, but they joined the demonstrations as Taiwanese protesters, and not as students. Further, university students did not initiate or lead the movement.

Through the mid-1990s, Taiwan's KMT-controlled educational system and mass media outlets included no mention of February 28. As a result, public knowledge of the event was virtually nil. It was only after Taiwanese DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian won Taiwan's presidency in 2000 that the long-suppressed historical record was opened, and widespread public awareness of the movement was achieved.

In the highly repressive two decades following the February 28 movement, contentious public political action was almost nonexistent. It was not until the early 1970s that such activities again appeared. This development was directly related to changes in Taiwan's international standing. In 1971, the Protect the Diaoyutai Islands (Bao Diao) Movement began as a KMT-supported nationalistic response to two international incidents that confronted KMT elites with a crisis of legitimacy. First, in the spring of 1971, the United States granted management of the disputed Diaoyutai[4] Islands to Japan (Austin 1998, 162–76).[5] Second, in October 1971, Taiwan lost its seat in the United Nations, cutting off diplomatic contact with numerous countries. Angered and unsettled by these events, the KMT encouraged intellectuals and students to rise up in protest. The ensuing movement quickly expanded into unanticipated calls for political and social reform. The KMT was able to co-opt some participants, but it launched a vituperative attack toward others that resulted in the detention of two students and two intellectuals (Chen 1990, 35).

In the late 1970s, a growing non-KMT (*dangwai*) movement pushed the quasi anticolonial struggle for political freedom and representation on the part of the Taiwanese. Off campus, around 1977, *dangwai* groups (led by dissident Taiwanese intellectuals) began to publish journals and support candidates for political office. Some students participated in these activities. At National Cheng-Chi University, for example, the ostensibly pro-KMT Youth Work Group aided *dangwai* candidates in the combined legislative elections of 1978. When school authorities uncovered these actions, the group was forced to disband for one year (Deng 1990, 15). Overall, through the end of the 1970s students in Taiwan at times joined in broader island-wide contentious political actions, but they did not act as an independent force or view their behavior as primarily *student* activism.

On-Campus Struggles in the Early 1980s

In the early 1980s this situation changed; for the first time, non-KMT university students began to organize and act collectively as students. They contested KMT controls over popular associations and media outlets, focusing especially on campus-level political restrictions. Unlike in countries such as the Philippines and Malaysia, but like in China, student contention was more pronounced at more prestigious higher education institutions. In Taiwan's case, students were by far the most active at NTU—the island's flagship university, which was established by the Japanese in 1928 and was taken over by the KMT-led ROC government in 1945. Even so, student activism in the early 1980s remained constrained by strict KMT controls over Taiwan's political institutions (including higher education) and media outlets, as well as the continued existence of martial law. In this context, only a small handful of university students dared to engage in contentious political actions.

These students focused their complaints on Taiwan's restrained campus and political systems, which they viewed as linked. Toward the end of 1981, some of the student members of an officially sanctioned campus academic group at NTU read banned writings by leftists and overseas historians (*Xin Xinwen*, February 23–29, 1992). Subsequently, they formed a small, secret group to work against the prescreening system for campus publications and for the popular election of student representatives. Calling themselves the "Five-Person Small Group" (Wuren Xiaozu), these students engaged in covert activities under cover of night, such as

writing "Popular Election" (Pu Xuan) on the blackboard and distributing pamphlets on campus advocating a popular election (He et al. 1990, 22). Simultaneously, members of the group spread their ideas through their membership in various legal campus groups (Deng 1990, 19). In the fall of 1982, some of these groups agreed to discuss popular elections in their next publication. When they encountered resistance from the KMT-dominated NTU administration, the allied groups spread an anonymous, unscreened flyer throughout campus, advocating popular election and student autonomy. Subsequently, the groups were ordered to disband or reorganize, and a key leader—Liu Yi-teh—was punished with one large demerit (again three large demerits led to expulsion; Deng 1990, 23). Although these student efforts were campus focused, because they targeted KMT policies and controls, they were inherently political and were directly aimed at Taiwan's ruling regime.

By 1983, student activists at NTU had won the chairmanship of the campus government. Subsequently, they began to focus on off-campus affairs and connections with other universities. Having obtained and read an account of the February 28 movement of 1947 from a foreign friend, Liu and his cohorts decided that they would now work to expose younger generations to the then little-discussed massacre of Taiwanese civilians by KMT troops. In February 1983, these students printed flyers describing the massacre and demanding a public historical recollection of the event. They also hung a banner outside the Taipei home of Peng Meng-Chi, a KMT official known as the "butcher of Kaohsiung" (Taiwan's major southern city, populated mostly by Taiwanese), due to his involvement in the massacre. Subsequently, the students secretly dispersed the flyers on other campuses (*Xin Xinwen,* February 23–29, 1992).

Shortly thereafter, NTU's KMT-dominated administration attempted to reassert its control over the campus. Most notably, campus authorities ordered the dissolution of one of the groups that had participated in the popular election protest. Upon receiving this news, NTU's reformist student government chair resigned (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 39; Deng 1990, 29). Consequently, NTU students returned to their earlier focus on furthering on-campus democracy and freedom. In October 1984, members of a NTU campus group called *University News* distributed copies of a blank newspaper, with a small explanation stating that KMT censorship precluded the printing of the article that had been prepared. Dubbed the "White Paper Protest," this action was the first in a

series of increasingly provocative student protest activities calling for campus reform.

In April 1985, student representatives from each of NTU's academic departments (many of whom were now proreform) took action to support the direct election of the student government chair, passing a temporary plan for the implementation of popular elections. The pro-KMT president of NTU and the minister of the KMT-controlled Department of Education roundly and publicly criticized the plan. In protest, the next issue of *University News* discussed the implementation of popular elections and criticized the dictatorial mind-set of the school authorities. For this publication, the general editor of *University News* received one large demerit (Deng 1990, 34). The next month, frustrated popular election activists donned T-shirts reading, "popular election," and marched to NTU's main gate, shouting, "Long live popular election," and "I love NTU" (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 2; Deng 1990, 34). In August, four student activists were given varying numbers of small and large demerits (three small demerits equaled one large), and student leader Lee Wen-chung was placed on probationary status (Deng 1990, 35).

Throughout the following school year, activists held meetings to discuss the implementation of a popular election, and the departmental representative assembly continued to pass resolutions calling for direct elections. Campus authorities, however, remained intransigent (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 42–43). In the spring of 1986, conflict flared when a "computer error" stalled Lee Wen-chung's registration for two months. In May, Lee and a few supporters held an on-campus sit-in and march to protest this political persecution, and they submitted a petition to the Department of Education. Subsequently, Lee received a notice from the army, informing him that his obligatory two-year service would begin early; he was to report to duty within five days. In response, Lee began a hunger strike, and reform-oriented students held on-campus marches and demonstrations. When uniformed and plainclothes officers ordered the students to disperse, some resisted; in the ensuing conflict, many students were beaten and several were injured. The next day, Lee left Taipei to join the army. Lee's protest and expulsion received widespread coverage in Taiwan's domestic media—it even was the topic of a *60 Minutes* show on one of Taiwan's KMT-owned television stations. In these reports, however, Lee was portrayed as a radical, politically motivated activist supported by *dangwai* dissidents, who had acted in blatant disregard of the legitimate academic decisions made by school

administrators (Deng 1990, 47–48; Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 4, 43–44). More broad-based student activism did not appear until Taiwan's political environment had further loosened.

On- and Off-Campus Struggles in the Late 1980s and Early 1990s

This loosening came in the mid- to late 1980s. It was spurred by extra-island factors, the predilection of KMT leader and ROC President Chiang Ching-kuo, and pressure from the *dangwai*/DPP movement. Consequently, university students came to enjoy a much more open political environment that decreased their fear of engaging in public contention and gave them hope that substantial political change was possible. In turn, this gave rise to much more widespread and extensive student contention in the latter half of the 1980s. During this period, relatively organized and provocative underground student journals and proreform groups arose at many of Taiwan's top universities (Fan 1991, 315; He et al. 1990, 22–23). While most remained focused on the KMT's political controls over freedom of expression and association on and off campus, some groups exhibited concerns with social and economic justice as well.

Groups of the latter type were left leaning but not procommunist. In 1986, for example, student activists joined nonstudent organized mass demonstrations to oppose the establishment of a Dupont chemical plant in the small east coast town of Lukang (Reardon-Anderson 1992). Approximately thirty students from four universities in Taiwan's northern capital, Taipei, traveled to Lukang, where they conducted interviews, did survey work, distributed flyers, and participated in protest marches. While there, the students were approached by KMT-dominated Investigation Bureau officers, who suggested that they return to campus and engage in more appropriate student activities. In late July the group returned to Taipei, and in September the group's survey results were published as a book (Deng 1990, 67; Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 5).

A few years later, students established the relatively left-leaning Democratic Student Alliance (Minzhu Xuesheng Lianmeng, or Minxuelian), which participated in a number of activities that were mainly organized by nonstudent groups (Deng 1990, 182; He et al. 1990, 23). For example, Democratic Student Alliance members participated in Taiwan's farmers' movement, which in 1988 became highly mobilized in response to Taiwan's trade liberalization. Members of the alliance were present at one of Taiwan's bloodiest conflicts of the 1980s: the May 20, 1988, farmer protest,

which culminated in numerous injuries and arrests, including the detention of eight students. Alliance members joined the movement to protect Taiwan's forests as well. Acting more independently from nonstudent groups, the alliance also helped organize "down to the countryside" (*xiaxiang*) rural work teams, wherein students spent time working with farmers (Deng 1990, 183–84; Fan 1991, 316). Though these students worked to avoid being labeled procommunist, this activity clearly was inspired by the PRC's Mao-era Cultural Revolution movement of the same name.

Meanwhile, other student activists remained focused on eradicating campus-level KMT controls. At NTU, which continued to be the site of the most contentious and organized student actions, this involved countering campus authorities' moves to reassert KMT dominance over university student organizations and publications. Most notably, in the fall of 1986, those behind producing *University News* were informed that their activities would be temporarily halted and their highest leaders reviewed. In reaction, *University News* and other campus student groups (many of which had no history of participation in protest activities) submitted a collective petition to the NTU president.[6] Shortly thereafter, three *University News* members were called to attend a punishment meeting. On the scheduled day, the three *University News* members, supported by thirty other students, staged a sit-in to boycott the proceedings (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 6, 44–47). In addition, twelve campus groups published a united letter appealing for freedom of expression. Nonetheless, *University News* was ordered to halt activities for one year, and its top three leaders each received one or two small demerits (as before, three small demerits equaled one large demerit). Subsequently, fifty campus groups signed a united letter calling for an end to the publication prescreening system, and more than one hundred graduate students issued a united letter in support.

As the struggle expanded, some core NTU student leaders decided to publish a new periodical, called *Love of Freedom* (*Ziyou Zhiai*). When the first issue appeared in December 1986, a campus march and meeting were held, attracting approximately eight hundred students (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 48–53; Deng 1990, 80–83; Fan 1991, 388–89). In January, NTU student activists organized numerous "soap box" speech meetings on campus. In March, students at NTU marched to the Legislative Yuan with a petition in support of campus reform signed by two thousand students. Subsequently, the KMT party branch offices at NTU withdrew from campus. In addition, students were allowed to hold their

first direct election for student union president, which was won handily by the reform candidate (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 98–99).

In 1987, student activism focused on campus-level reform spread outside of NTU, as college students from a wide array of higher education institutions formed a University Law Reform Promotion Group (Daxuefa Gaigecujinhui, or Dagehui). In July, the KMT announced a plan for university law reform, incorporating many of the group's demands. The same month, the Department of Education announced that it would commence research on the issue, and the topic also was scheduled for discussion in the Legislative Yuan. The University Law Reform Group took an active part in these debates, holding mass teach-ins and meetings and producing literature on the subject. The group also dispatched students to the Legislative Yuan, where they met with lawmakers for formal interviews and private meetings. In addition, the group held sit-ins and street marches to press the Department of Education to open its meetings to the general public (Ziyou Zhiai Editing Group 1987, 98–99, 146–47). In September 1989, the largest student demonstration to date was held. More than two thousand students took to the streets of Taipei, marching to both the Department of Education and the Legislative Yuan to "protest university law, and build a new university" (Fan 1991, 316). Many participants later were interrogated by campus authorities, and some were punished with demerits (Deng 1990, 219–20).

Simultaneously, students became increasingly active in efforts to propel island-wide democratization. In June of 1987, the DPP began a major push for a complete reelection of the National Assembly. In the spring of 1990, students mobilized in massive numbers around this issue, in what came to be known as the Month of March (Sanyue) or Wild Lily (Yebaihe) movement. Although their goals were virtually identical to those of the DPP, students consciously eschewed public connections with the party's demonstrations. (We return to the logic behind this distinction later.)

What sparked the Month of March Movement was the National Assembly's scheduled selection of the president of the ROC in March of 1990. About three weeks before the scheduled selection date, students gathered near the KMT central offices and unfurled banners inscribed with the Four Big Demands: (1) reelect the National Assembly, (2) abolish the old constitution, (3) present a schedule for political reform, and (4) convene a National Affairs Conference to discuss political reform (*Zili Wanbao* 1990; *Xin Xinwen*, March 21–April 1, 1990). Two days later, students began a sit-in outside the main gate of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial in Taipei

(Fan 1991, 404; *Xin Xinwen*, March 21–April 1, 1990). Hundreds of city folk, including various social movement group leaders and six DPP representatives, came to observe and support the event (Deng 1990, 309).

The next day, sitting ROC president and Taiwanese KMT leader Lee Teng-hui made a televised speech, urging all ranks of society to face the coming election with a calm and rational attitude (Deng 1990, 407). That evening, the television news included a positive report on the sit-in—a first in Taiwan (Deng 1990, 311; Fan 1991, 407). At the same time, newspaper reports compared the student protests to the righteous demonstrations that had occurred in mainland China the previous spring. These reports invigorated the protestors, drawing many more participants and onlookers (Fan 1991, 408). Before long, students from across the island had joined the protests, and more than three thousand students went on a hunger strike (Deng 1990, 318–19). Simultaneously yet separately, the DPP held a mass demonstration at the memorial. As the protests continued, the National Assembly elected Lee president. One of his first acts was to meet with student representatives. After securing Lee's promise to address two of the students' Four Big Demands, the student protestors agreed to withdraw from the square (Deng 1990, 33).

After the students returned to their campuses, reform-oriented groups sprouted at virtually all universities and many previously underground groups went public (Deng 1990, 386–87). Numerous schools also held their first popular election for campus representative groups. In many of these elections, reform-oriented student participants in the Month of March Movement won the presidency (Deng 1990, 389; *Xin Xinwen* June 11–17, 1990). Within a few years, democratic reform of the national political structure was completed as well.

Watching over Taiwan's Democracy in the 2000s

Despite this remarkable political transformation, Taiwan's political system has not been entirely stable. Perceived undemocratic behavior on the part of the KMT and the DPP and perceived threats to liberal democratic rule have continued to fuel sporadic student protests. In these postdemocratization collective actions, students have continued to view and portray themselves as an independent social force, and their concern with the protection of Taiwan's still-new democracy has remained intertwined with nationalist sentiments.

In 2004, a small but determined group of students who identified themselves as a nonpartisan force mounted a hunger strike in the aftermath of the March presidential election. In the run-up to the vote, the polls showed an exceedingly close yet volatile battle between sitting DPP president (and Taiwanese) Chen Shui-bian and the KMT (and also Taiwanese) candidate Lien Chan.[7] The day before the election, Chen was shot while campaigning. Although the wound was relatively minor, supporters on both sides responded with emotion: KMT supporters expressed suspicion that the shooting had been staged, and DPP loyalists reacted with indignation. When the votes were cast the next day, Chen won by a tiny .22 percent margin. The KMT ticket initially refused to concede, challenging the results.

In this context, a handful of students began a hunger strike at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial. They demanded that KMT and DPP leaders apologize for causing political chaos and social restlessness in the course of the election and that a task force be formed to investigate the shooting. DPP leaders accused the students of being affiliated with (and spurred by) the KMT, but the students adamantly insisted on their independence and self-motivation. After two days, police carried the students away, but they returned the following day to resume their protest. One week later, President Chen met with a group of students to discuss the protesters' concerns. Although a number of hunger-striking students refused to attend the meeting, the protests dispersed shortly after the dialogue (*China Post* 2004a, 2004b; Wu 2004; Guo 2004; BBC 2004; Chung 2004).

In the fall of 2008, perceived threats to democratic governance and renewed nationalist sentiment on the part of many Taiwanese sparked much more sustained and large-scale student protests, known as the Wild Strawberry Student Movement (Yecaomei Xueyun). In the presidential election of March 2008, KMT candidate (and mainlander[8]) Ma Ying-jeou won with 58 percent of the vote, ending the DPP's eight-year stretch of presidential power and the island's twenty-year rule by a Taiwanese president affiliated with either the KMT (Li Teng-hui) or the DPP (Chen Shui-bian). In early November, student protests arose in response to the government's use of force against citizens who had attempted to demonstrate during the November 3–7 visit of Chen Yun-lin, the chair of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). In the first few days of Chen's visit, approximately ten thousand police officers were deployed. Along with preventing protesters from displaying Taiwanese and Tibetan flags and anti-China slogans, officers closed

a shop that broadcasted the album "Songs of Taiwan." When protesters resisted these moves, the police responded with violence; in the confrontations that ensued, nearly one hundred fifty officers and up to three hundred individuals were injured, and eighteen were arrested (Amnesty International 2008). On November 6, roughly five hundred university students and faculty members held a sit-in at the entrance of the Executive Yuan. A few days later, the same number of students began a month-long occupation of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial.[9] Over the course of this time, more than a dozen domestic social activist groups, two hundred artists, Tibetan representatives in Taiwan, and former (Taiwanese) KMT leader and president Lee Teng-hui traveled to the memorial to express their support. Meanwhile, sit-ins and protest activities sprouted at universities across the island. On December 7, the movement climaxed with a roughly three thousand–person march in Taipei.

Along with demanding an apology from President Ma and the resignation of the directors of the National Police Agency and National Security Bureau, the students called for the revision of Taiwan's Parade and Assembly Law. This law requires citizens to apply for permits before holding a demonstration and allows the government to prohibit protest in particular locations and to forcibly disperse protesters who violate these rules (Lin 2008). In early December, legislators promised to discuss the Parade and Assembly Law in the Legislative Yuan, leading students to agree to end their protests (Taiwan Wild Strawberries Movement 2008; Associated Press 2008). Yet in a clear slap in the face to the protesters, the police chiefs involved in the suppression of demonstrators in conjunction with Chen Yun-lin's visit were promoted. Further, in the midst of the movement, the Ministry of Justice presented new regulations requiring the presence of ethics officers on university campuses, raising fears that the pre-1990s system of governmental monitoring would be reinstituted. Similarly, campus administrators at NTU declared the campus a "neutral, apolitical" zone that was to be free of Wild Strawberry activities (Taiwan Wild Strawberries Movement 2008). Overall, although student activism has waned in the aftermath of Taiwan's democratization, continued concerns about the fragility of the island's relatively new democracy remain enmeshed with Taiwan's still-vulnerable international status and still-unresolved tensions between mainlander and Taiwanese sentiments.

Links with Other Social Groups

As Taiwan's students have explored and expanded their political activism, they have evidenced varied levels of coordination with other actors. Many have been closely linked with the *dangwai*/DPP movement. Yet when large and sustained student protest actions arose in the spring of 1990 and the fall of 2008, students were careful to demonstrate their pure "student" identity. In both movements, student protesters erected a security line to delineate the sit-in participants. They also emphasized their independence from the DPP, which held separate mass protest gatherings in both 1990 and 2008.

Although data are not available regarding the motivations behind this student separatism in 2008, interviews with leaders of the 1990 protests suggest that their concern with maintaining autonomy from the DPP and other social groups arose from justified fears of slander and repression. Most importantly, the student leaders of the 1990 Month of March Movement stressed that separation was necessary to maintain order and assure student safety. As one leader stated in a 1993 interview with the author, "Our biggest question was how to avoid being slandered, being accused of being used . . . or being infiltrated by bad people. With the security line, everyone could see that we were all students." Similarly, student leaders feared that the KMT would use any appearance of disorder as a pretext to crack down on the movement. In the words of another leader, "We feared that if the masses mixed in with the students, the KMT might use more forceful measures to control the movement. . . . We wanted support from [the masses], but also didn't want to act with them because we feared KMT suppression. It was a contradiction . . . we did not really want the security line, but we needed it to ensure our safety" (author interview 1993). As one leader noted, "outside of the [security] line, it was not organized; if we got rid of the line, there was no telling what would happen" (author interview 1993).[10] Further, student leaders felt that separation would ease the fears of the many demonstrating students who had little prior protest experience (author interviews 1993). Overall, leaders of the 1990 movement explained that the students' insistence on maintaining autonomy and purity was a practical response to the KMT-controlled political environment.

Interestingly, in 1990 the students were particularly concerned with remaining distinct from the DPP and its activities. Although student and DPP demands were almost identical, and despite the fact that

many of the student protestors were members of the DPP and had a shared Taiwanese identity, they feared that association with the DPP would raise the risk of official slander and violence. Historically, members of the DPP had not only been harshly repressed, but they also were associated with more confrontational (and sometimes violent) protest tactics.[11] In addition, DPP members had instigated numerous fistfights within the Legislative Yuan.

For these reasons, the students felt that despite their agreement with the DPP's stand, it would be unwise to join forces. As one student leader explained in a 1993 interview with the author, "Why did we fear [union with] the DPP? . . . [because] the media has historically given the DPP a bad name." Consequently, he continued, "Student leaders, even if they were DPP supporters, could not admit it." Similar to student leaders in China in 1989, students in Taiwan in 1990 feared that the ruling regime would use any appearance of disorder as a pretext to crack down on the movement. Thus, although students in both Taiwan in 1990 and China in 1989 claimed to have preferred a more inclusive mobilization strategy, in both cases they feared that it would have dangerous results.

In 2008 student activists also insisted on their independence from the DPP, consciously drawing on the precedent of the protests of 1990. Yet as a result of Taiwan's democratization, the likelihood of repression was much lower in 2008 than it was in 1990. Since the DPP has come to hold substantial power within Taiwan's government, students have appeared to want to demonstrate their independence from the DPP not because they fear repression, but rather to show that they are unaffiliated with what many feel is a corrupt political structure.

Conclusion: The Conditions for Student Vanguardism

In sum, although students have been influential in propelling and protecting Taiwan's political liberalization and democratization, their activist efforts have focused mostly on the removal of KMT political controls over association and expression at the campus level. Furthermore, Taiwan's students have undertaken large-scale protest activities only when there have been signs of political opening on the part of the ruling regime, and they often have followed the lead of nonstudent dissident movement groups, particularly the *dangwai* movement and the party to which it gave birth, the DPP. Yet despite the sometimes close connection between students and other activist groups, students often have been insistent

on maintaining the public perception that they are a "pure" force, unaffiliated with partisan causes. They have done so both to gain legitimacy in the public eye and to lessen the likelihood of their official repression.

More generally, the history of student activism in Taiwan suggests the conditions under which students may be expected to act as a vanguard force. Overall, the characteristics of the governing regime influence the potential for any sort of collective contentious action (led by students or any other group). In Taiwan from the 1940s through the early 1970s, authoritarian political leaders did not feel vulnerable to foreign pressure to reform, and they were resolved to stymie democratic change. Under these circumstances—and as was also the case in China and Burma in the late 1980s—the ruling regime could and did successfully repress and stifle dissent. In Taiwan from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, in contrast, governing leaders faced great external pressure to accede to political liberalization and democratization. Hence, the opportunity for successful popular protest widened dramatically.

Yet even when such an opening emerges, the case of Taiwan suggests that students may take on a leading activist role only when another group is not already acting in this capacity. In Taiwan at the island-wide level, the *dangwai*/DPP served as a vanguard force for democratization; as a result, there was no vacuum for students to fill. Consequently, students focused their activist efforts on eradicating the KMT's political controls over popular association and expression on the university campus. Given the thorough politicization of Taiwan's higher education system by the KMT throughout much of the post–World War II period, these student activists have thus played an integral, if comparatively subtle, role in Taiwan's larger story of democratization.

Notes

1. About 2 percent of Taiwan's population was aboriginal.
2. Supplementary elections for the Legislative Yuan were provided for in constitutional amendments of 1966. The first election for supplementary seats was held in 1969.
3. These criticisms were precipitated by three specific cases. In 1981, Dr. Chen Bunseng, a professor at an American university, was found dead on the NTU campus. In 1984, Chiang Nan, author of a biography on Chiang Ching-kuo, was killed by assassins in the United States. Also in 1984, Chinese-American writer Henry Liu was murdered in San Francisco. The head of Taiwan's Defense Ministry Intelligence Bureau later was convicted of plotting Liu's death.

4. *Senkaku* in Japanese.
5. The islands formally were placed under Japanese jurisdiction following China's defeat in the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–95 (in the same treaty that ceded Taiwan to Japanese control). However, China claimed that this represented an act of conquest, while Japan asserted that it simply formalized Japan's existing sovereignty over the islands. Further complicating matters, the various treaties concluded at the end of World War II did not specifically mention the group of islands, leaving the question of sovereignty open to varying interpretations. In 1953, the United States specifically identified the islands as falling under American jurisdiction. Thus, when the United States granted management of the islands to Japan in 1971, this long-simmering dispute burst into the public discourse.
6. Nonetheless, they did so with some degree of trepidation. As one of these academic student group members related to the author, "We were young, and kind of afraid. At the time, the outcome was not clear, there was no guarantee regarding the risk. At the same time, though, we felt that we couldn't ignore the mistreatment of *University News*."
7. In the 2000 presidential election, Chen won with only a plurality (39 percent) of the vote; nearly 60 percent of voters sided with KMT candidate Lien Chan or independent candidate James Soong, a longtime KMT politician who had split with the KMT when he was not selected to be the party's presidential candidate. By the end of Chen's first term in office, his popularity rating had sunk to 48 percent. In the 2004 election, James Soong ran as the KMT's vice presidential candidate.
8. This designation is complicated by the fact that Ma was born in Hong Kong, a British colony at the time.
9. While DPP leader Chen Shui-bian was president, the memorial was renamed Liberty Square, but the KMT-dominated legislature resisted this change. Shortly after KMT leader Ma Ying-jeou became president, he changed the name back to Chiang Kai-shek Memorial. The Wild Strawberry student protesters referred to the location as Liberty Square.
10. This statement was repeated almost verbatim in another author interview.
11. As noted earlier, founders of the DPP had been involved in the Chung-li incident of 1977 and the Kao-hsiung incident of 1979. In addition, in August 1988, police attempting to arrest DPP legislator Hung Chi-chang (for his alleged involvement in violent demonstrations in May and June) were met by approximately eighty protestors wielding clubs. In the three-hour confrontation that followed, three officers sustained head injuries and were hospitalized. Similarly, in October 1989, a riot erupted as DPP members protested the arrest of DPP leader Hsu Hsin-liang. Fifteen officers and at least ten demonstrators were injured; fifteen protestors were detained. Further, in January 1990, seven DPP members were charged with instigating a riot following a disputed election, and in February, a DPP rally turned into a fifteen-hour street battle, resulting in the destruction of nineteen cars, the injury of more than one hundred persons, and the arrest of five.

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5 SOUTH KOREA: PASSION, PATRIOTISM, AND STUDENT RADICALISM

MI PARK

Benedict Anderson notes in *Imagined Communities* that the idea of nation can be "the domain of disinterested love and solidarity" (1983, 131), and for this reason, nations can ask for sacrifice. Student dissenters in South Korea have frequently challenged authorities in the name of national interests and made major personal sacrifices for the sake of their struggle. Their endeavor has often succeeded to the extent that their "political love" for the nation has assumed a certain "moral grandeur" (Anderson 1983, 132) in the eyes of the general populace. As this chapter will show, passionate patriotism has characterized student activism in South Korea since the early twentieth century. The potentially dampening impacts of massification and privatization of higher education on student activism were long mitigated by this patriotism and the related strong traditions of student political engagement.

Among the cases studied in this book, South Korea is arguably the one in which students have played the most significant role in shaping national political contention and even prompting regime change.[1] Students were not only crucial to the anti-Japanese nationalism of the early twentieth century but also the uprising in 1960 that forced the resignation of the country's ruler, Syngman Rhee. Students then became a major opposition force in the 1970s and 1980s, and they led mass protests that brought an end to authoritarianism in 1987. This chapter shows that Korean student activism, crystallizing in times of repressive political regimes, was galvanized by rich traditions and cultures of protest action bequeathed from previous student generations. Since the transition to democracy, however, the visibility and impact of student protest has declined significantly.

Explaining the rise and decline of student activism, this chapter analyzes the relationship between prevailing political ideologies among

students (or narrowly speaking, the students' self-perception of their role in society) and the political opportunity structure. To trace the intergenerational heritage of student protest, the first part of the chapter adopts a chronological approach, surveying the ideological orientation and main activities of student dissenters in five phases. These are the anticolonial (1910–45), liberal democratic (1960–61), populist (1964–79), revolutionary (1980–87), and pluralist (1988–present) phases. The remainder of the chapter stands back from the ebb and flow of events and analyzes the factors that account for the rise and fall of student protest, focusing on the structural context that conditioned student protest and, especially, on the student activist subculture that sustained it.

Anticolonial Origins: 1910–45

Korean students were influential political actors from very early in the twentieth century. By 1919, Korea had 133,557 students and 1,251 schools (C. S. Lee 1963, 120). University education was limited to only a small segment of the elite (Kim and Lee 2006, 560), with only a few higher-educational institutions existing at that time.[2] However, there were larger numbers of middle and high school students, and students at all levels played a key role in the national independence movement during the Japanese occupation (1910–45). Students led momentous protest movements including the March First Movement of 1919, the June 10 uprising of 1926, and the Gwangju student uprising of 1929 (Koon 1989, 70).[3]

In 1919, encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's national self-determination doctrine, Koreans sought to present their case for national independence to the Paris Peace Conference. Starting with a demonstration of four hundred Korean students in Japan in February 1919, about four to five thousand Koreans, including many students, gathered for a national independence rally in Seoul on March 1 (Nahm 1983; C. S. Lee 1963, 113). Within days, independence demonstrations spread nationwide to encompass over two million participants in more than 1,500 gatherings (T. S. Lee 2000, 134; Cheon 2004, 74). Approximately 12,880 students (from two hundred middle high schools and colleges) were involved in the March First Movement, which lasted until the end of April (Cheon 2004, 74). Even children took part, with about 14 percent of all primary school students participating in the protests (Cheon 2004, 74). The Japanese colonial administration ruthlessly suppressed the demonstrators, arresting 19,525, killing 7,645, and injuring 15,961 (T. S. Lee 2000, 134;

C. S. Lee 1963, 118). Out of the arrestees, 135 persons were university students and 1,801 were students from both middle high and primary schools (C. S. Lee 1963, 116–17).

The March First Movement played a decisive role in the making of Korean national identity by producing numerous national heroes and martyrs. One of the martyrs was Yu Gwan-sun (1902–20), a seventeen-year-old student from the Ehwa Women's College (later Ehwa Women's University), who died in prison after playing a leading role in the demonstration (T. S. Lee 2000, 140). School children in postcolonial Korea learned stories and songs commemorating the March First uprising and the national icon Yu Gwan-sun. This central involvement by students in the early struggle for national independence positioned students at the center of Korea's national birth myth, conferred strong nationalist legitimacy on their subsequent political engagement, and bolstered their sense of moral obligation to become actively involved in political affairs in times of national need.

The Korean independence movement continued throughout the 1920s, peaking with large student demonstrations in 1926 and 1929. At this time, the majority of Korean students were purely nationalist in their political orientation. However, it is worth noting that in both demonstrations a small number of left-leaning (procommunist) students came to play a significant role. After the establishment of the Communist Party of Korea (CPK) in 1925, some segments of the student population came under its influence. Students at several universities in Seoul (e.g., the Severance Medical School, the Gyeong-seong Imperial College, the Yeon-hui College, and the Bosung College) set up the Science Study Circle (Jo-gwa-yeon) as a political venue for the independence movement. Under the leadership of Lee Beong-lip (a student of Yeon-hui College, later Yonsei University), students affiliated with the Science Study Circle played a key role in mobilizing students for the June 10 uprising in 1926 (Yun 1989, 128; Kang 2007), after which the administration arrested five thousand people and jailed hundreds of CPK members (Yun 1989, 116).

Despite the crackdown, Korean students erupted again three years later in waves of street demonstrations and class boycotts against colonial rule. Lasting from November 1929 until March 1930, this unrest later became known as the Gwangju student movement. Approximately 54,000 students from 149 schools from the middle school level and above took part in anti-Japanese demonstrations (Nahm 1983, 31; S. B. Kim 1989, 117). As in the 1926 uprising, socialist students played a significant

role. The Japanese administration revealed that in at least twenty-seven schools involved in the protests the ringleaders had links with procommunist organizations (S. B. Kim 1989, 117). For their involvement in the uprising, 582 students were expelled and 2,330 were indefinitely suspended (S. B. Kim 1989, 136). Following this repression, overt forms of resistance such as class boycotts and street demonstrations subsided from 1930. Many leftist students in the later period of colonial rule (1930–45) went abroad to China and Russia to join the armed struggle against Japan, while others focused more on organizing workers and farmers in the factories and countryside (Kang 2007).

Liberal Democratic Dissent: 1960–61

Immediately following Japan's surrender in 1945, Korea was partitioned into the U.S.-controlled South and the North, which was under the influence of the Soviet Union. In the South, the national liberation forces that had spearheaded armed resistance against the Japanese had assumed control of society and formed the Korean People's Republic (Hart-Landsberg 1998, 64). However, the occupying U.S. forces refused to recognize the People's Republic and instead established a U.S. military government (1945–48). Suppressing political dissent, the military government also pressured the United Nations to carry out an election only in the South (Hart-Landsberg 1998, 84). As most people in the South boycotted the election, the result was an electoral victory for a pro-U.S. politician, Syngman Rhee (1948–60). By 1948, Korea was officially divided into two republics: the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). Cold War geopolitics and the subsequent Korean Civil War (1950–53) resulted in four million casualties and turned both republics into extremely regimented societies.

Syngman Rhee manipulated elections and fashioned an increasingly authoritarian regime. The ruling party ruthlessly suppressed political dissent, including moderate opposition forces such as the Progressive Party (Jin-bo-dang), whose leader Jo Bong-am was executed for treason in 1959 for advocating peaceful reunification of the peninsula. As in the previous anticolonial period, both university and school students were the first social group to voice their opposition (Cheon 2004, 203). Spontaneously organized by students from the middle school level and above, the student protests in 1960 (later known as the April Revolution) enjoyed wide support from the population, eventually bringing down

Rhee's regime. Having been educated in an extremely anticommunist climate, most students at this time believed that the world was divided into the two camps: the U.S.-led "free world" and the Soviet-dominated totalitarian communist world. Thus, when students initiated their movement against the Rhee regime in 1960, they did so by framing it as a patriotic action to defend a liberal democratic system in South Korea (D. C. Kim 2006, 621). Demanding the restoration of democracy in the polity as well as in academia, the student protesters of 1960 argued that democracy was the best weapon against communism (An 1997).

The course of events in 1960 began on February 28 in Daegu, when hundreds of students from several high schools took to the streets. In a bid to prevent people from attending an election rally organized by the opposition party, the government had ordered all schools and workplaces to remain open that day, a Sunday (An 1997, 25). The order angered students who previously had been forced to attend state-sponsored rallies and applaud government officials (An 1997, 25). The directive to attend school on a Sunday was the last straw. Students stormed into the streets and shouted slogans such as "Do not use students as political tools" and "Restore democracy in academia" (An 1997, 28). Similar protests happened in other cities during the days leading to the presidential election on March 15. On polling day itself, pent-up feeling against political harassment and official corruption erupted in demonstrations. Thousands of students and citizens in Masan clashed with the police when voting fraud was discovered. In breaking up the demonstration, the police killed nine people and injured eighty (An 1997, 75). Announcing a landslide victory for Rhee, the government blamed the Masan incident on the opposition party and claimed that "communist sympathisers" in it had instigated a "riot" (An 1997, 77).

From this point, students in all major cities took to the streets almost every day, demanding a new election and investigations into the Masan killings. When universities opened on April 1, university students joined the demonstrations. Starting with four thousand students from Korea University marching on April 18, most universities in major cities took part in the movement. On April 19, approximately fifty thousand students in Seoul (in a city of 2.5 million people) marched through the center of the city. Police opened fire, killing 186 protestors and injuring about 1,600 (Q. Y. Kim 1996, 1189). Almost half of the 186 casualties were university and high school students (Q. Y. Kim 1996, 1190). On April 25, despite martial law, a group of 258 university professors marched

in the streets, demanding Syngman Rhee's resignation. Teenage school children stood in front of the soldiers guarding the Presidential Palace and begged them not to shoot (An 1997, 237). That day, the soldiers did not fire. Against this backdrop, the U.S. withdrew its support from Rhee and sections of the ruling elite and military turned against him. Rhee was forced to resign.

Under the new and more democratic Chang Myon government (1960–61), greater freedom of expression allowed a variety of social and political issues, including reunification, to come up for public debate. After the April Revolution, the North Korean regime proposed establishing a mutual exchange between the two republics (Hong 2002, 1238). Despite the government's rejection of this proposal, most students desired improved ties with North Korea. Although most students were anticommunist, some pan-Korean nationalist students at the Seoul National University took an ideologically neutral but strongly nationalistic stance on the unification issue. In November 1960, about two hundred students from the Seoul National University set up the National Unification League (Min-tong-nyeon), which later claimed two thousand members (Hong 2002, 1242). Alarmed by this unification campaign, some conservative students on campus began organizing counterdemonstrations (Douglas 1963).

At this time, not only students but also other social groups were vociferous in their demands for change. Independent trade unions jumped in number from 588 in 1959 to 914 in 1960; there were 282 industrial actions involving blue collar workers and school teachers between April 1960 and May 1961 (Cheon 2004, 180–81). Against this background, the National Unification League issued a statement proposing a North-South student conference on May 4, 1961, and the proposal triggered a backlash by South Korean conservatives. The combination of a defiant student movement, resurgent labor activism, and factional fights within the government terrified the military and the propertied classes (Cumings 1997, 346–47). Soon, the military intervened, staging a coup and ending further discussion of reunification. Immediately after the coup, the military government arrested 2,500 activists and charged them with procommunist activities (Hong 2002, 1238).

Populist Protest: 1964–79

The new military regime under Park Chung Hee (1961–79) embarked on a program of state-led, export-oriented industrialization. This program

both necessitated and drove a rapid expansion of education. The number of students (enrolled in all levels) swelled from six million in 1964 to more than eight million in 1971 and over ten million by the end of 1970s (Kinney 1981, 184). In 1960, there were eighty-five universities with 142,000 students, already a dramatic expansion from twenty-eight universities with 7,800 students in 1945 (Q. Y. Kim 1996). But by 1980, the university student population had jumped to almost 580,000. Concentrated in major cities, students were a potentially powerful political force. Though they faced considerable state repression, students organized major waves of protests every few years during the reign of Park Chung Hee, notably in 1964, 1967, 1969, 1973, 1974, and 1979. Two key issues of contention during this period were the Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty and the Yushin (revitalization) Constitution.

In 1964, students held nationwide demonstrations against the Park regime's plan to normalize relations with Japan. For an entire week beginning on March 24, 217,000 students from thirty-seven universities and 163 middle and high schools participated in antinormalization rallies (Cheon 2004, 195). They argued that given the lack of a sincere apology from Japan for its colonial past, the treaty would mean national humiliation. Students believed that Park had compromised the dignity of the Korean people for monetary gain (in the form of economic aid and capital investment from Japan) and that the proposed economic relationship under the treaty would subjugate Korea to Japan and deepen the already unequal economic relationship between the two. Anti-Japanese sentiment among Korean students in the 1960s sharply contrasted with their pro-Americanism at that time. Students' nationalistic discourse did not challenge the hegemonic position of the United States in Asia at least until the early 1980s. This explains, according to Kim Dong-Choon, the absence of any significant anti-Vietnam war protest in South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s (D. C. Kim 2006).

In 1967, the ruling party achieved an election victory through coercion and fraud, prompting about fifteen thousand university and high school students to protest. Two years later, when the National Assembly revised the constitution to permit Park Chung Hee to continue his presidency, students protested once more. Opposing the constitutional revision, law students from Seoul National University framed their action as a defense of national interests. They argued that continuation of Park's rule would deepen Korea's dependency on Japan (Cheon 2004, 202). Their initial protest quickly spread to other universities. Between June and October

1969, 157,000 students (from fifty-five universities and thirty-seven high schools) took part in the protests against the constitutional revision (Cheon 2004, 202). As in the past, the government arrested student leaders and closed the universities (Emergency Christian Conference 1975, 32). To suppress political activism on campuses, the government increased police surveillance and used the military conscription law to force activists into the army.

In 1971, students refused to undergo compulsory on-campus military training and staged demonstrations. At this time, there were other troubling signs for the Park regime. Growing support for the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP, shinmin-dang) was evident in parliamentary elections. In addition, the changing U.S. relationship with China (expressed in the Nixon doctrine and subsequent mood of détente) was not a desirable development for the Park administration. In this context, the government's response to the protests was draconian. It arrested two thousand students and forced about seven thousand into compulsory military service (Emergency Christian Conference 1975, 33). This crackdown was followed in 1972 by martial law, under which the national assembly was suspended and all political parties were dissolved. Soon thereafter the regime promulgated the Yushin Constitution that suspended civil rights and strengthened presidential power.

The Yushin Constitution provoked resistance from university students and some liberation theology–inspired Christian labor groups. In 1973, the National Democratic Youth–Student League (Min-cheong-hang-nyeon), a nationwide student organization against the Yushin Constitution, organized a series of demonstrations, involving three hundred Seoul National University students and two thousand Yonsei University students (Emergency Christian Conference 1975, 61). The state clamped down on the anti-Yushin movement, alleging falsely that the Student League had links with pro-North Korean forces including a communist organization, the People's Revolutionary Party (In-hyeok-dang), and aimed to overthrow the state. The regime had eight people connected with the party executed; it charged many other people with violations of the National Security Act. A Catholic bishop, Ji Hak-sun, a strong advocate of human rights and a critic of government oppression, was imprisoned on suspicion of providing funds to the league. This violence and repression, however, had the unintended consequence of alienating significant sections of the Korean population. "From this time," it was argued, many Christians "moved to the front lines of the democratic struggle" (Emergency Christian Conference

1975, 173). The human rights committee of the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC), founded in 1974, now played an important role linking social groups together by forming various ad hoc organizations (Shin et al. 2007, 36).

In fact, state repression was giving rise to a new opposition coalition. Economic growth under the Park regime was achieved through extreme regimentation of society and a ruthless state crackdown on labor and curtailment of civil liberty. While repression hampered the effectiveness of the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP), dissenting voices came mainly from university students, workers, and Christian labor groups. According to the Stanford Korea Democracy Project, which analyzed the social composition of antiregime protesters between 1970 and 1979, students made up 38 percent of all protesters and were the major dissenting social group, followed by workers (17 percent) and Christians (16.5 percent) (Chang 2008, 656).

The rise of worker protest also began to affect the student movement. In 1970 Jeon Tae-il, a textile factory worker, had committed self-immolation to protest the inhumane conditions of sweatshop workers. His death prompted many university students to pay attention to the *minjung* (toiling masses). To raise public awareness about the plight of sweatshop workers, Seoul National University students went on hunger strikes and organized rallies (Cheon 2004, 211). Starting from 1970, university students together with Christian groups began concerted efforts to reach out to workers and farmers.[4] The Christian Academy and the Urban Industrial Mission in particular played an instrumental role in organizing workers in the 1970s by offering training and assistance to workers and labor leaders. The Christian Academy trained many leading labor activists including about one thousand agrarian movement organizers (Kum 1997, 127–28). The Academy's influence was so significant that the government introduced the Labor Disputes Adjustments Act, banning third party involvement in union affairs.

In the late 1970s, South Korea went into an economic crisis. Rising inflation compounded by the second oil shock forced many workers into hardship, and some labor disputes developed as workers sought basic rights. In 1979, the government brutally suppressed a sit-in by Y. H. Trading Company workers and ousted Kim Young-Sam, the leader of the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP), who was sympathetic to the workers. This triggered antigovernment protests in Pusan, Kim's hometown, and a nearby city, Masan. About six thousand university

students in Pusan and eight hundred university students in Masan staged demonstrations against the suppression of Y. H. workers and the NDP (C. S. Lee 1980, 69). Many members of the ruling elite were afraid that the harsh repression of political dissent and labor strife might backfire (Koon 1989, 170). The schism led to the assassination of Park by the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in 1979.

The interim government (1979–80) saw an explosion of political mobilization and militant industrial action. University students demanded repeal of the Yushin Constitution and newly unionized workers waged industrial action. As strikes and protests mounted, peaking with a strike by miners in the region of Sabuk, conservatives in the government and the military lost patience. Military hardliners (led by General Chun Doo-Hwan) staged a coup and declared martial law. University students took to the streets to protest, calling for the removal of Chun and the immediate termination of martial law. By mid-May in 1980, daily demonstrations involved at least fifty thousand people in Seoul alone (Cumings 1997, 377). On May 13, using the false pretense of North Korean infiltration and provocation, Chun mobilized the army, stationing soldiers around major government buildings. On May 14, more than sixty thousand students and citizens took to the streets of downtown Seoul to demand an end to martial law. On the following day, the number of protesters increased to one hundred thousand. On May 17, the government arrested more than a hundred student leaders and political dissidents, and the whole country was effectively placed under emergency rule. Events came to boiling point in Gwangju, in the south of the country, where police brutality against large-scale student demonstrations prompted the citizenry to protest en masse. The Gwangju protest ended with the massacre of hundreds of civilians by the army. Soon thereafter, Chun Doo-Hwan made himself president of South Korea (M. Park 2008).

The Revolutionary Phase: 1980–87

The Gwangju uprising marked a turning point for Korean students. As many Korean scholars point out, without the Gwangju experience, it would be impossible to explain the upsurge of radicalism in the 1980s (D. C. Kim 1998). In the post-Gwangju era, a sense of urgency for radical change and of historical responsibility became pervasive among students. The massacre became an emotional basis of solidarity and commitment for activists: students "constantly reminded one another of the memory

of Gwangju. They turned the shame of the survivors into the hatred against the ruling class" (Jo 2002, 133). By radicalizing youth, Gwangju heralded the era of a new "revolutionary student movement" (*hak-saeng hyeong-myeong un-dong*). Students came under the sway of leftist ideologies, including Marxism-Leninism and Juche ideology, the self-reliance ideology that was the official state doctrine of North Korea. In a situation where even moderate political dissidents were tortured and jailed by the state, Leninist clandestine methods of organization had great appeal to radical students and intellectuals. Meanwhile, continued U.S. support for the South Korean regime made many university students turn to Juche ideology, because they saw North Korea as fiercely anti-imperialist. During this period, leftist activism spread to virtually every campus in the country, making students a formidable political force. This period also saw the rise of underground leftist organizations such as the National Student League for Democracy (Jeon-min-hang-nyeon), the Committee for Nation, Democracy, and People (Sam-min-tu-wi), the Committee for National Autonomy, Democracy, and Unification (Ja-min-tu), the Student League for National Democracy (Min-min-hang-nyeon), the Council of University Student Representatives (Jeon-dae-hyeop), the Constitutional Assembly (Je-heon-ui-hoe), and the Socialist Student League (Sa-hang-nyeon) that existed on many campuses, organizing and coordinating the most militant protests.

To recruit new adherents, activists utilized informal social networks of university students such as student departmental meetings (*hak-hoe*) and campus clubs. Prospective members of leftist organizations mentioned earlier underwent intensive membership training that consisted of reading and discussion of Marxist literature, volunteer work in agricultural areas (*nong-hwal*), and taking on factory work (*gong-hwal*), among other activities (Park 2005). From the mid-1980s onward, leftist activists dominated most student councils and occupied key positions in university newspapers and university broadcasting stations. The prominence of left-leaning student organizations on campus created a political atmosphere where most students were routinely exposed to leftist populist ideas.

Given secret methods of operating through cell structures (see Park 2008), it is difficult to know the real membership figures of the clandestine groups. However, the number of attendees at illegal political gatherings can be used as indicators for the mobilizational capacity of key groups. About three thousand students representing thirty universities

participated in the inauguration rally of the Student League for National Democracy (Min-min-hang-nyeon) in 1986. In the same year, more than 1,300 students participated in the inauguration rally of the Patriotic Student League (Ae-hang-nyeon). According to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, the National Student League for Democracy (Jeon-min-hang-nyeon), a Marxist-Leninist underground student organization, had 1,200 members from sixty-four universities (Park 2008). Many radical Korean nationalists, or followers of Juche ideas, were elected to student unions and consequently controlled the National Council of University Student Representatives (Jeon-dae-hyoep).[5]

Student demonstrations steadily increased from 1980 onward and became a daily event in every major city by the mid-1980s. For instance, an estimated five hundred thousand students took part in 2,138 illegal demonstrations across the country in 1985 (Park 2008). Student action was not confined only to university campuses. Hundreds of students went to the factories and countryside to organize workers and farmers (Park 2008). In the year 1984 alone thousands of students from thirty-four universities participated in *nong-hwal*, volunteer activism on farms (E. B. Hwang 1985, 93). Students' *nong-hwal* preparation usually involved two week intensive seminars on the South Korean economy and the condition of Korean farmers, followed by a two or three day conference in which participants would come together to reconfirm their commitment to the cause of working in the countryside. The actual *nong-hwal* itself would last only one or two weeks. While engaging in hard labor in the rice field, student volunteers would engage in informal talks with farmers concerning issues relevant to them, such as debt, labor shortages, and market liberalization (Seo 1988, 420–21). In addition to *nong-hwal*, many students took part in *gong-hwal* (factory activity). During school breaks, university students affiliated with leftist clandestine groups worked in factories as a part of their training to become real worker and labor activists. There were isolated attempts to carry out *gong-hwal* in the late 1970s, but it was only in the 1980s that *gong-hwal* became a mass phenomenon in the sense that university students went to factories en masse (Y. S. Kim 1999). It was reported that about two hundred to three hundred students of Yonsei University were secretly involved in *gong-hwal* in the year 1985 alone (E. B. Hwang 1985, 185–86). Socialist student groups made *gong-hwal* guideline booklets to teach students how to research working conditions, how to befriend workers, and how to set up a union legally (E. B. Hwang 1985, 186).

Many students concealed their academic background to become workers, known as *hak-chul* (student background) or "disguised" workers. It was estimated that there were about three thousand *hak-chul* workers in Seoul and Inchon in the early 1980s, and by the late 1980s the number increased to ten thousand (Y. S. Kim 1999, 88). About 85 percent of the staff of the National Council of Trade Unions (Jeon-no-hyeop), the precursor of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), came from underground labor circles of former students (Y. S. Kim 1999, 242–43). The League of Socialist Workers in South Korea (Sa-no-maeng), with an estimated membership of four thousand, had about 310 active labor organizers in sixty-nine factories in five regions, and all leading members of the organization's central committee consisted of *hak-chul* workers (Park 2005, 2007, 2008).

Students' concerted organizing efforts and political mobilization came to fruition in 1987 when more than a million people took to the streets of cities around the country to demand constitutional reform. These nationwide protests, later dubbed the Great June Democratic Struggle of 1987, forced the Chun regime to make sweeping political changes including direct presidential elections. Immediately after the government's declaration of political reform, workers began nationwide industrial action demanding greater rights and paving the way for the emergence of an independent trade union movement. In short, students were the leading force in the antiregime mobilizations of the 1980s. They played an instrumental role in organizing independent trade unions, farmers' organizations, and other social movement organizations.

Pluralism and Decline: 1988–Present

In the first years of the new democratic regime, between 1987 and 1991, South Korea experienced explosive growth and proliferation of new occupational organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and social movement organizations of many types, including women's, environmental and youth movements. Paradoxically, the influence of the student movement as a leading political force against the state began to decline precisely as the political space it had previously struggled for began to open up.

One reason for the decline in students' influence was deepening political divisions within the student movement itself and a degree of radicalization in a part of the movement that alienated many ordinary

students and other citizens. Antigovernment student activists were increasingly divided into two political camps, National Liberation (NL) and People's Democracy (PD), which disagreed on a range of issues including Korea's reunification, electoral tactics, and a worker's party. NL-aligned students subscribed to Juche ideology and believed that the United States was responsible for the division of Korea and continued to be the main hindrance to reunification. In contrast to the NL students, the PD camp followed the Soviet interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and was critical of the North Korean regime. In addition, PD students stressed the strategy of aiding striking workers and trade unions with an aim to build an independent workers' party. NL students prioritized anti-American struggle and reunification above all else. Between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, NL students mobilized thousands of students to protest against U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. In 1988, the National Federation of University Student Representatives (Jeondae-hyeop) and the Seoul Federation of University Student Councils (Seo-chong-nyeon), both NL-led student councils, staged more than two dozen protests outside U.S. diplomatic and military facilities. Defying the National Security Act, NL-aligned student delegates went to North Korea to promote peaceful unification and cultural exchange.

However, the NL students' obsessive campaigning on reunification alienated many ordinary students, who viewed the "national liberation" strategy as repetitive, authoritarian, and outmoded (Park 2008). As a sign of dissatisfaction, in 1989, a large number of university student councils elected PD-aligned students into leadership positions. The PD current, which subscribed to Marxism-Leninism but was not oriented to the North Korean regime, prioritized a strategy aiming at the empowerment of *minjung* (the people) and the working class. PD students sought to channel student activism toward building a workers' party and helping in the struggles of trade unionists and farmers. However, this worker-oriented strategy itself became less persuasive among university students from 1987. Factional tensions, political rivalries, and bitter ideological disagreements between the PD and the NL drove many students away from activist politics altogether (Park 2008).

Ideological disorientation and disenchantment with communism following the disintegration of the Soviet bloc from 1989 also contributed to the demise of the student Left. Economic and political reforms in South Korea itself further undermined the attractiveness of Leninist and Juche strategies. With the introduction of freedom of expression and electoral

democracy, political parties became diversified and began to represent more plural societal interests. Trade unions and civil society groups proliferated and mobilized around workers' rights, women's rights, media reform, and the environment. The focus of student activism in the early 1990s became similarly diffuse. The state was no longer the main target of contention as many students turned to diverse societal, cultural, and electoral realms for their activism. Various civil society groups raised a dazzling number of social issues. In addition to workers' strikes and farmers' protests, there were numerous campaigns demanding reform in housing, education, health care, and transportation systems. Facing competition from such an array of interest groups, and now lacking the unifying appeal of a struggle against military dictatorship, the revolutionary student movement went into decline.

It was not until the late 1990s that leftist student activists found a new point of convergence: opposition to neoliberal globalization. Starting with the Uruguay Round negotiations in 1996 and the government's "flexible" labor bill in 1997, workers and farmers staged strikes, sit-ins, and street demonstrations against neoliberal reforms, with many students lending their support. Since 1997, students have taken an active part in the movement against the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (Park 2009). However, although there have been some large demonstrations, students have not in this period recaptured the élan of the antidictatorship struggle nor have they been the leading force of opposition as they were intermittently between the 1960s and 1980s.

Explaining the Rise and Decline of the Student Movement

It has been argued that students often emerge as a political force when no other social groups are able to mount an effective challenge to an authoritarian regime. As Mark Thompson puts it, "The repression of labor, the dependence of business and the collaboration of religious elites creates a political vacuum. This empty oppositional space has been occupied by student activists" (Thompson 2008; see also introduction to this volume). This argument generally holds true for Korea. The three regimes that South Korean students confronted in the second half of the twentieth century—those of Rhee (1948–60), Park (1961–79), and Chun (1980–87)—all shared one thing. By creating an extremely anticommunist political environment, they delegitimized even moderate

political dissent, let alone class politics. Major sectors of society (labor, capital, and the middle class) were either suppressed by the state or co-opted in a way that made them unable to act independently of the state. Under these circumstances, Korean students found themselves as the only social group with the resources (time and knowledge) and preexistent mobilizing structures (student councils and societies) that enabled them to challenge the power holders. This situation sharply contrasted with the post-1987 setting when almost all sectors of society—including the working class and the urban middle class—were able to flex their political muscle. In this later period, although students were active in many civic groups (environmental, youth, feminist, cultural groups, etc.), they were no longer regarded as the vanguard of a democratization movement. The newly opened political space was filled with competing political parties, trade unionists, organized farmers, and NGOs. Political contestation became akin to a neoliberal market swamped with competing brands. Students lost their monopoly on "virtue" in leading the struggle for democracy and political change.

The "vanguard in a vacuum" thesis, however, identifies only the structural conditions under which students might emerge as a vanguard. It needs to be supplemented by an analysis of subjective factors, such as prevailing perceptions of students concerning their place in national politics and their framing repertoires. Looking at these additional factors allows us to understand how students may come to exercise leadership. Historical legacies and traditions of student activism can confer legitimacy on student involvement in politics. As Philip Altbach notes, in some countries "where students were an important part of independence movements and have an established place in society's political mythology, activist movements are seen as a normal part of the political system and students are seen as legitimate political actors" (1998, 248). South Korea is a case in point.

The history of student activism in South Korea is full of instances where students referenced, were inspired by, or modeled themselves on earlier generations. The March First Movement of 1919 and the April Revolution of 1960 "gave rise to a potent legend of righteous students" that "inspired subsequent student radicals to repeat that extraordinary success" (Q. Y. Kim 1996, 1190). During the April 1960 uprising, university students chanted a slogan: "Defend democracy by following the spirit of the March 1st" (An 1997, 178). A student protester in 1960 wrote, "Our seniors sacrificed themselves for the liberation of our motherland. Now,

it's time for us to sacrifice ourselves to defend democracy in our country" (An 1997, 219). Such attitudes were reaffirmed by prevalent moral discourse on the role of intellectuals. The teachings of Korean Confucianism emphasize that "an educated elite was expected to provide leadership for society by setting a moral example in wisdom and virtue" (Bedeski 1994, 108), and some student activists echoed these views. During the turbulence of 1960, for instance, an editorial of the student newspaper of Korea University noted, "We reject intellectuals who do not act" (An 1997, 151) and urged fellow students to join the antigovernment protest. In this moral climate, it is not surprising that students and the general public alike regarded students as legitimate political actors playing a role as "the conscience of the nation" (Kinney 1981, 194).

Against this political background, it is hardly surprising that students in the late 1960s and early 1970s made the Korea–Japan normalization issue *their* issue, with the Student Association of Korea University at one point in 1973 arguing that the country should "stop the humiliating relationship with Japan" (Emergency Christian Conference 1975, 69). The activists justified their action by claiming that "they are the inheritors of the April 19 Revolution and they are the students for Korean people" (Emergency Christian Conference 1975, 68–69). In the 1980s, student dissenters opposed the Chun regime on the grounds that the regime was *sa-dae-ju-ui* (serving the foreign powers) by subjugating Korea to U.S. and Japanese imperialism. In such ways, pan-Korean nationalism provided student dissenters with a powerful, moral weapon against the variant ruling ideologies of anticommunism, "Korean-style democracy," and developmentalism. In a nutshell, students' activism in Korea since the turn of the twentieth century has been deeply rooted in patriotism and students' self-perception that they act as the "conscience of the nation."

The Growth of Higher Education and a Changing Student Subculture

South Korea also provides important lessons regarding the impact that a changing higher education sector may have on student activism. Unlike in many other countries studied in this volume, massification of higher education did not have an adverse impact on student activism in South Korea. The transition from elite to mass higher education in South Korea took place between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s (Kim and Lee 2006; Hayhoe 1995). In the mid-1970s, about 7 percent of the relevant age cohorts in Korea were in higher education institutions

(Kim and Lee 2006, 557). Assuming that 15 percent of the relevant age cohort signifies the threshold for consolidation (Hayhoe 1995, 300), the mass higher education system in South Korea was consolidated by 1985, when 37 percent of the age cohort were enrolled in higher education. However, despite massification, South Korea has maintained a "highly stratified higher education system" (Hayhoe 1995, 305). Most private institutions tend to have "low prestige" (Hayhoe 1995, 320) while "a handful of elite universities, both public and private, wield immense power" (Brender 2006, 50). It can be argued, therefore, that the fact that the leadership of the student movement came from elite universities in Seoul may have added credibility and respectability to student dissenters. This helps explain why the revolutionary wave of student protest took place throughout the 1980s, even though massification of higher education was more or less consolidated.

Likewise, the argument that commodification of higher education increases individual careerism rather than political activism by fostering competition among students does not hold true for South Korea. As Table 5.1 shows, expansion and privatization of higher education were well under way by the late 1960s. Private enrollments stood at well over 70 percent by 1980. Highly competitive university entrance examinations, high educational expenditures by private households, and social pressure on individuals to graduate from an elite university—all factors that

Table 5.1. Higher Education Expansion in South Korea

	PERCENTAGE OF AGE COHORT	STUDENTS PER 10,000 POPULATION	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	PERCENTAGE PRIVATE
Funding Source of Education				
1950	N/A	N/A	11,358	N/A
1960	4.7	40	98,798	N/A
1965	6.2	50	141,636	72.8
1970	7.5	63	201,436	67.4
1980	N/A	161	578,465	73.7
1985	37	N/A	N/A	77.7
1989	N/A	399	1.5 million	N/A
1993	N/A	N/A	2.1 million	N/A
1998	N/A	N/A	N/A	83.3
2002	N/A	N/A	3.5 million	N/A

Sources: Hayhoe 1995, 301; J. B. Lee 2001, 163; Kim and Lee 2006, 557.

were present in South Korea—could be expected to foster individualistic careerism instead of political activism. Yet such factors did not produce a depoliticized educational environment. How can we explain this outcome?

Explanations for the seemingly negligible influence of privatization and massification on dampening student activism can be found in factors such as the official goals of education, the history of student activism, and prevailing student campus subcultures. About the South Korean education system, Q. Y. Kim notes, "education stressed general knowledge rather than narrow skills. Formal socialization emphasized national service as the goal of education, and national issues became the dominant topic of conversation among students. The larger the university population grew, the stronger became the students' concern and interest regarding national politics" (1996, 1186). In so far as the official emphasis on national politics remained a powerful factor shaping students' self-perception, massification of education only enhanced students' power by swelling their numbers. There were 7,800 university and college students in 1945 and 34,000 in 1952 (J. B. Lee 2001, 163). By 1973, students made up 8 percent of the population of South Korea, with a number thirty-eight times larger than the student population of Korea in 1945 (Koon 1989, 71–72). In addition, the high urbanization rate (74 percent in 1992) made Seoul one of the world's largest and most densely populated cities; it was also the nation's educational center, with a high concentration of universities. When a large number of students in a geographically concentrated area find themselves sharing similar political grievances, this can create a volatile situation conducive to political activism. The mobilizational capacity of student dissenters depends not only on the size of the student population but also on its concentration; the larger and the more concentrated the student population is, the stronger its political impact may be.

Of course, the numerical power of students does not automatically translate to political power unless students form a collective entity endowed with a strong sense of emotional and ideological unity. It was this powerful sense of collective identity and the political context of an intensifying struggle against the regime that kept Korean student movement politics intense despite trends in the higher education sector itself. As many social movement scholars have noted, "a tradition of political activism and the activism subculture" (Gill and DeFronzo 2009, 206) can be a powerful antidote to the potentially demobilizing effects of privatization and massification of higher education. The memories of student

struggle against the Park dictatorship in the 1970s and the Gwangju uprising of 1980 left a strong legacy on the consciousness and ideological disposition of the post-1980 generation of university students. As Nancy Abelmann puts it,

> In the 1980s students arrived at college campuses that were completely enveloped in the atmosphere and activities of the student movement. Even if not all students were *undongga* [committed activists], the vast majority shared the movement perspective and "carried the weight of the country on their backs." Students of the 1980s, Cho Haejoang [a Korean anthropologist] continues, saw the prohibition of campus newspapers, stood by as friends were taken off to be tortured, and experienced the sudden disappearance and even the suicides of classmates. Students came to feel that "the only way to live with a conscience is to be a *tusa* [fighter]." In the innermost recesses of their hearts, the non-*tusa* lived with the sense that they were sinners and were reviled by activist classmates. (1996, 231–32)

In such a campus political climate, students were readily exposed to leftist populist ideas available through leftist publishing companies, book stores, and campus newspapers. Left-leaning research centers, founded by professors and graduate students sympathetic to dependency theory and various versions of Marxism, flourished (see Kum 1997). In addition, everyday interactions in the micromobilization context (reading groups, student societies, student councils) socialized students into political activism. Aie-Rie Lee's work on 1980s student activists confirms the importance of campus socialization. Her findings indicate that campus socialization, measured by knowledge of activist groups and readership of activist publications, was eleven times more related to student political activism than other social background factors such as class and regional differences (A. R. Lee 1997, 60).

If such an atmosphere could flourish in the context of massification and privatisation of the education sector, it seems obvious that the subsequent decline of student activism after 1987 has more to do with political liberalization and its demobilizing effects rather than the structure of the education sector itself. In post-1987 South Korea, what E. J. Hobsbawm has called "the sense of urgency" that makes people commit to revolution (1977, 252) was no longer pervasive among the new generation of students, leading to a steady decline in the intensity and impact of student activism.

Student Identity and Coalition Building

Finally, it is necessary to make some remarks about the level of coordination between students and other groups in their social movement activity. Although the South Korean experience was marked by a strong sense of student collective identity, it also saw very powerful coalition building, peaking in the 1980s when many students not only allied with workers but also went to work in factories and become labor organizers. This high level of coordination between students and other social groups sharply contrasted with the relatively low level of coordination prior to 1980. What accounts for varying levels of coordination between students and other actors in civil and political society? The answer can be found in the political ideologies of student activists and in how state repression had an impact on coalition-building efforts. In the case of South Korea, students' alliance with workers was clearly driven by leftist ideology, such as liberation theology, Marxism, and Juche, as well as state suppression.

Prior to the radicalization of the 1970s and 1980s, student activists had few links with other groups. Students in 1960 criticized the authorities for corruption and their failure to follow democratic procedures. However, they were mostly not opposed to the underlying economic and political system per se. They believed that if politicians only would follow the rules of liberal democracy, Korean society would return to normalcy. They were not interested in making links with other social groups and primarily focused on pressuring politicians to clean up political corruption. Students were reformist in their political orientation and lacked an overarching transformative vision. Accordingly, they organized mainly single issue oriented campaigns and did not prioritize building links with other social groups until the mid-1970s. Although there were a number of coalitions, ad hoc groups, and informal ties and support networks between students and other social groups in the 1970s, the ties were more or less reactions to state repression. The Association of the Families of Prisoners of Conscience, the United Movement for Democracy and Unification, and the Human Rights Committee of the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC), all founded between the mid-and late 1970s, were examples.

Thanks to the emergence of informal networks of dissidents throughout the 1970s, the later generation of university students was able to forge a more formal, institutionalized alliance with workers, farmers, Christian

labor activists, journalists, intellectuals, and dissident NDP members. As previously mentioned, the student movement of the 1980s was anti-system. It espoused a radical transformation of Korean society. Variant Marxist ideologies in the 1980s oriented the student movement toward organizing the working class.

However, the phenomenon of "disguised" workers and *gong-hwal* ended in the early 1990s. With more political channels available to them, many students embraced the idea that students should pursue careers in professional occupations such as medicine, law, and teaching, so many sought to make changes in their own professional fields. With the collapse of the authoritarian regime, many leftist students now believed that rather than revolutionary mobilization of workers, a long-term Gramscian "war of position" was more relevant to post-1987 Korean society, encouraging many of them to move away from the traditional emphasis on the working class to middle class professionals.

The South Korean experience also allows us to refine our understanding of the impact of state repression on student political action. As noted in the introduction to this volume, state repression can have very different outcomes: it can both facilitate and dampen mobilization. The South Korean experience informs us that coercion without ideological control is likely to fail. Under the Park and Chun regimes, the ruling ideology of the state was rooted in anticommunism and developmentalism. State slogans such as "Growth first and distribution later" and "Nationbuilding through exports" promoted the idea that the Korean people had to sacrifice in the present for the sake of a powerful and prosperous Korean nation in the future. These regimes also warned against leftist elements threatening the stability of Korean society and warned that "excessive" democratic activity would destabilize society and undermine national security. The existence of the Communist North was used to justify human rights violations and suppression of political dissent. Anyone suspected of supporting an antistate organization could be charged with violating the National Security Act, a charge that could carry a death sentence. Yet what exactly constituted an "antistate organization" was never made clear. The authoritarian regimes thus put society under intense ideological pressure to view political dissent as collaboration with the enemy.

This ideological control began to break down from 1980, in part due to the counterhegemonic activities of student activists and their allies. In the 1980s, anticommunist ideology became less effective in controlling

a disgruntled population. The Chun regime was increasingly viewed by many citizens as reliant on American support for its existence and as having come to power by killing its own people. The student movement criticism of the regime's authoritarian ideology began to hit home, and many Koreans came to feel that extreme restrictions of political freedoms could not be justified by the claim of a communist threat. The state's routine reliance on brutal and excessive measures to suppress social discontent, and its labeling all such discontent as being communist or communist-inspired, bred both alienation and general disbelief in government claims. Moreover, the threat of imminent war with the North lost its power to frighten the population, with war gradually becoming a distant memory. A 1989 survey revealed that 55 percent of students distrusted information on North Korea they learned from school textbooks (Han-jeong-yeon 1989, 207–8).

In the absence of ideological persuasion, state repression (especially indiscriminate violence as opposed to selective persecution) tends to radicalize youth. Thomas Greene (1984) and Charles Brockett (1995) suggest that arbitrary and indiscriminate state violence tends to increase society's revolutionary potential by radicalizing moderates and by turning apathetic people into sympathetic supporters of revolution. Their argument is applicable to the post-Gwangju society of South Korea. South Koreans witnessed hundreds of civilians gunned down by the military and many more jailed. The military attack on Gwangju citizens discredited moderate political voices in the democracy movement and prepared the stage for radicals, including students.

The scope and longevity of student activism may also depend on the presence or absence of a unifying theme. Every society is fractured along the lines of various sectoral interests (class, gender, language, ethnicity, religion, etc.). Indiscriminate state repression tends to bring these diverse sectors together by creating a common enemy and shared feelings of victimization. In South Korea before 1987, diverse sectors of society shared a common goal of opposing the military dictatorship. Their "unifying theme" found its political expression in the demand for constitutional reform featuring a direct presidential election. Once people were given the possibility to change the regime through peaceful electoral means, there was no unifying theme that could keep the heterogeneous civil society together.

Conclusion: A Distinctive Pattern of Protest

Students have played a crucial role in South Korean politics over the last half century, but they have done so in ways that at least in part defy broader patterns in Asia. Idiosyncratic interactions between structure (cold war geopolitics, changing regime types, and the educational industry) and agency (collective memories of past struggle, framing and collective identity) account for the unique patterns of student activism in South Korea. Except for the *developmentalist wave* that was present in South Korea between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s (when many students identified with the developmentalist goals of their governments, even as they criticized them for their repression and corruption), South Korean students did not follow the cycles of protest visible in other Asian countries. The two major characteristics of the *leftist* and the *democratization waves* (antistate and antisystem ideologies on the one hand, and fervent antiauthoritarian coalition building on the other) occurred simultaneously during the massive upsurge of student unrest in the 1980s. Moreover, this upsurge occurred at a time when massification of higher education had already consolidated—a factor that dampened protest in many other countries.

There are at least three unique features of the cycles of student protest in South Korea. First, the "suppression of class politics or ideological conflicts in politics" (D. C. Kim 2006, 629) from the time of the Korean Civil War meant that the leftist or revolutionary wave of student activism arrived late in Korea, sandwiching it into the democratization movement of the 1980s. Second, the scope and longevity of student activism relates clearly to the rise and fall of leftist ideology. Once the steam was taken out of left wing politics by political reform and international developments, student activism found it difficult to sustain itself. Third—and here there are many parallels with other Asian nations—"passionate patriotism" has been a key driving force behind student activism.

Empowered by their love for the nation, tens of thousands of students took to the streets in protest against the leaders they believed were betraying and violating the interests of the nation. Even the appeal of Juche ideology in the 1980s was not so much driven by attraction to the North Korean economic model but rather by its rhetoric about Korean autonomy and its rejection of American and Japanese imperialism. Nation and democracy have been the two dominant organizing frames for Korean student movements since the early twentieth century. Students' ideas about what democracy must entail changed over the century, but their

patriotism has never failed to provide a powerful emotional basis for solidarity and self-sacrifice.

Notes

1. For a chronology of major student protests in Korea since the late nineteenth century, see Cheon 2004, 359–413.
2. The institutions of higher education at the turn of the twentieth century were Ewha Women's College (later Ewha Women's University), Severance Medical School, Yeonhi College (later Yonsei University), and Bo–seong College (later Korea University). By 1945, when Japanese rule ended, there were nineteen higher-learning institutions with fewer than eight thousand students in total (Kim and Lee 2006, 582).
3. For Korean spelling, standard Revised Romanization is used in this chapter, except in cases of well-known names such as Syngman Rhee, where I have used the commonly accepted romanization.
4. The Christian groups included the Protestant Urban Industrial Mission, the Catholic Farmers' Association, the Korean National Council of Churches, the Student Christian Federation, the Christian Youth Council for the Defense of Democracy, the Catholic Labor Youth, and the Korean Christian Academy. All were influenced by liberation theology .
5. In 1993, *Chundaehyup* changed its name to *Hanchongryun* (the Korean Confederation of Students).

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6 INDONESIA: MORAL FORCE POLITICS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST AUTHORITARIANISM

EDWARD ASPINALL

In February 2004, T. Rizal Nurdin, the governor of the province of North Sumatra, opened a meeting of Student Executive Bodies (Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa) from eighty campuses around the country. He gave a warm greeting to the students, noting that "history has proven that the position of university students, together with youths, always determines the future of the nation, starting with 1908 [*sic*] (the youth pledge, or *sumpah pemuda*), 1945 (proclamation of independence), 1966 (correcting the government), up to 1998, when the students were noted as pioneers of *Reformasi*. . . . In each era of national awakening, the youths and students have always been the vanguard. The approach to the coming general election in 2004 will be no exception; the role of students will very much determine the success of this 'festival of democracy.'"[1]

These remarks, with their formulaic recounting of key moments in twentieth-century Indonesian history, succinctly illustrate the central position that youth and, more specifically, university students occupy in official accounts of Indonesia's national narrative. It is common in Indonesia for senior government officials, intellectuals, and military officers to make such comments. Recognizing students in this way is not simply a defensive response to their mobilizing power, revealed when they triggered the collapse of President Soeharto's New Order regime in 1998. Of the countries of East Asia, Indonesia is one where student mobilization has been most prominent and most politically consequential: students not only played an important role in establishing the authoritarian New Order regime in 1965–66 and destroying it three decades later, but they were also arguably the most significant and sustained oppositional force in the intervening period. Remarkably, even when the New Order regime

was at its height, government officials frequently made comments that were similar to Governor Nurdin's, recognizing students' political role and even praising it.

Governor Nurdin's comments were thus conventional. But he made them in an environment of some controversy. In particular, his appeal for students to support the election caused debate among many student activists. According to media reports, some participants in the meeting proposed that students should reject the election altogether. The general consensus was that students should maintain their role as a moral force outside the formal political system.[2] The bitterness of the debate was sharpened by the fact that at around this time, several prominent former activists in the anti-Soeharto student movement had just announced that they were running for parliament. To make matters worse, some were doing so for Golkar, the political party of the old regime. Many of their former comrades accused them of betraying the "pure" struggle of the students.

Such strongly morally tinged language has been characteristic of student activism in Indonesia for forty years. For much of that period, the flip side of the claim that students were crucial political players was another claim: that they constitute a distinctive kind of political force. In this view, they are a political force that is not, strictly speaking, political at all. Rather, they are a moral force (*kekuatan moral*) or a moral movement (*gerakan moral*). Many, perhaps most, student activists in Indonesia have thought of themselves in these terms over the last four decades. In a general sense, the claim to be a moral force implies that students are motivated only by moral principles and ethics, and they are uncontaminated by the dirty and corrupting world of politics. They take action to save the nation at times of crisis and are not motivated by *pamrih* (personal interest), not themselves seeking political office, nor trying to put patrons in power. Very often, the moral force idea also implies student separatism: the notion that students should not build alliances with other social or political groups who might pollute the students' agenda with their own interests.

These ideas have not been uncontested. On the contrary, they have been the subjects of frequent and often bitter debate. They were challenged in a sustained way by a generation of radical activists from the late 1980s. However, even today, participants at student seminars and meetings often ask whether the student movement should be moral or political.

The moral force idea has been very resilient. It remains, if not dominant, at least a very strong frame of reference for conceptualizing student activism.

This chapter treats this distinctive moral political outlook as an entry point into the wider history and dynamics of student activism in Indonesia. It proceeds through several parts, each of which addresses the origins, effects, and evolution of moral force thinking and simultaneously addresses the major thematic and comparative concerns that guide this volume.

The first section takes a historical approach to the question of causation, while at the same time providing a summary history of Indonesian student activism in the post–World War II period. While other literature posits sociological and even psychological explanations for student activism, this chapter starts with the much more simple observation—namely, that Indonesia's student movement can be dated to a particular moment in modern Indonesian history: 1965–66. At that time, a certain way of thinking about students—that they were uniquely morally motivated and uniquely obliged to voice the political aspirations of the wider populace—took hold. This basic idea was endlessly reproduced over the following decades both in official discourse and in campus culture, explaining much about why students became such a prominent oppositional force.

The second section looks at the category of students as a political identity. It elaborates upon the moral force ideas that suffused thinking about student activism during the New Order years and considers some of their effects, most notably a tendency to separatism. These ideas were highly contested, often sparking bitter internal debate—especially toward the end of the New Order—as some student activists started to repudiate the history that linked their forebears to the regime and strove to build alliances with other social groups, partly acting under the influence of radical student groups in other parts of Asia.

The third section deals with the broad problem of how these student politics were shaped by interaction with the political regime. It focuses on how this moral identity frame for motivating student activism was itself largely a response to the two existential threats the regime posed to student activists: repression and co-optation. Emphasizing the morality of student action and students' special status as a category of political actor was a way to steer between both threats, partly accounting for why moral force thinking remained central to student activism until the end of the regime.

Overall, this chapter argues that student activism in Indonesia has been intimately linked to the history of authoritarianism. In fact, it proposes that the Indonesian student movement (as opposed to activism *by* students) was basically a product of the high authoritarian period in modern Indonesian history. It is not simply that some students felt motivated to oppose the New Order regime; that much is obvious. More fundamentally, the idea that they should do so *as students* and not as members of some other category was a product of that regime, its history, structure, and ideas. Before the New Order, the idea of the university student as an important political actor hardly appears. After the New Order, though its legacy lingers, it is rapidly losing efficacy as the student body—and thinking about student politics—fractures along the multiple social, political, and religious lines that cleave Indonesia. Indonesia's student movement was a child of authoritarianism, as much as it was its destroyer.

The Origins and Rise of the Indonesian Student Movement

In modern Indonesian history, there was one moment at which the category of *mahasiswa*, the university student, became important politically and to which all subsequent student activist movements oriented themselves. That moment was 1965–66, the birth of the New Order regime.

However, it was not as if 1965–66 was the first time that students had been politically important in modern Indonesian history. During the period of nationalist awakening in the early twentieth century, some of the tiny group of indigenous students in Dutch schools and higher education institutes played an important role in developing and propagating nationalist ideas. Students at STOVIA, the advanced secondary school for training "native" doctors in Batavia (Jakarta), for example, were important in establishing Budi Utomo, the first protonationalist organization in the country in 1908. Sukarno himself, the most significant nationalist leader and later the country's first president, studied at the country's first higher education institute proper, the engineering college that later became the Institut Teknologi Bandung, and was a founder member there of the Algemene Studieclub (General Study Club). Other prominent nationalist leaders, such as Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, first became active politically as members of Perhimpoenan Indonesia, the Indonesian Association, when they were university students studying in the Netherlands. Right to the end of colonial rule, however, the higher education sector in the Netherlands's East Indies colonies itself

remained miniscule. For example, only seventy-nine college students graduated in the Indies during 1940, when the total estimated population of the colony was seventy million. The total number of higher education graduates between 1924 and 1940 was 532, only 230 of whom were indigenous (Thomas 1973, 36–37, citing Wal 1963).

The microscopic size of the higher education sector meant that university students did not play a significant role as a group in the independence revolution (1945–49), although some prominent nationalist leaders were college or university graduates. In contrast, many high school students and students from Islamic boarding schools participated directly in the physical struggle to liberate Indonesia from Dutch rule, as did many ordinary young people. The image of the revolutionary *pemuda*, or youth, with long hair, a dashing personal style, and a fierce commitment to unrelenting struggle against the Dutch became one of the lasting symbols of the revolution (Anderson 1972; Frederick 1989). This period thus furnished mythic references that resonated powerfully over subsequent generations, including for many university students, but these myths were about the revolutionary potential of youth and their commitment to populist and nationalist ideals, rather than about university students in particular.

In the parliamentary democracy period of the 1950s, and the subsequent Guided Democracy regime (1959–65), Indonesia slowly began to develop a larger and more diverse higher education sector. By 1960, there were already reportedly more than 135 higher education institutions, with perhaps sixty thousand to seventy thousand students (Thomas 1973, 87). However, many observers have noted that the 1950s and early 1960s were a period of relative political quiescence on campuses, with most university students being hedonistic, elitist, and apolitical. Yet this was also a time of mounting national political tensions and growing mass politicization, as the cold war conflicts of the period coincided with and exacerbated profound disagreements among domestic political players about the character of Indonesian society and the future of the young republic. The major national political parties began to eye university students as a pool of potential recruits as part of their attempts to build mass constituencies by creating organizations of farmers, workers, women, artists, and other groups, including students. The largest national organization of university students was the Islamic Students Association Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), which was loosely aligned with the modernist Islamic party Masjumi.[3] During the early 1960s, and mirroring

the leftward drift in national politics, left-wing groups—notably the communist Indonesian Student Movement Concentration (Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia, or CGMI) and the left-nationalist Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (GMNI)—became increasingly assertive, with the former organization leading a vociferous campaign for the banning of HMI.[4] Thus, although many students were becoming more politically active, most were doing so as part of national, non-campus political movements. As one observer put it, "Student political organizations in 1963–65 were not particularly student-directed in terms of their goals and activities" (Douglas 1970, 131).

In this context, it is not surprising that during the first two decades of Indonesian independence from 1945, few people saw university students as an important group politically or as one that shared collective agency. There was certainly no concept of a cohesive and autonomous student movement. Prior to 1965–66, the more politically loaded term was *pemuda* (youth), rather than *mahasiswa* (university student). *Pemuda* were celebrated as the chief progenitors of nationalism in the first decades of the twentieth century and the primary actors in Indonesia's national revolution. This was a more catchall, and thus, egalitarian term, more suited to the populist and radical nationalist political climate of the time.

All this changed after 1965–66, when anticommunist students played a major role in bringing about the downfall of President Sukarno and his regime, and in supporting the establishment of the New Order. The trigger event here was the so-called 30 September Movement, a left-wing putsch within the armed forces in which six senior officers were murdered. This in turn led to a backlash by the military and its allies that eventually destroyed the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI), killed perhaps half a million people, and brought down President Sukarno. Shortly after this event, a group of students created the Indonesian Student Action Front (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia, or KAMI), and organized protests that at first spearheaded the attack on the PKI and its affiliates, demanding their banning, and subsequently called for first the purging of Sukarno's government of leftist elements and then for the president's removal and his government's dismantling. The rowdy and often large student protests organized by KAMI and its allies were important in providing civilian legitimacy for the army to take power and in urging it to turn its anticommunist purge against the Sukarno government.

The students involved in KAMI were part of a tiny privileged elite, in a context in which the university sector as a whole remained an island of privilege in an overwhelmingly agrarian and impoverished society. Moreover, students from the most elite campuses, the University of Indonesia in Jakarta and the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), dominated KAMI. Many of the organization's leaders had backgrounds in HMI and in the student organizations of the Catholic and Protestant parties, forces that had long been opposed to the PKI. In the words of one observer, KAMI was "the initiative of a select group of elite Djakarta students who happened through socio-economic status to have intimate connections with powerful military officers most sympathetic to the Soeharto group" (Paget 1970, 136). It was in mockery of their elite social origins that President Sukarno dismissed his student attackers as types "with shiny shoes, pleated skirts, wearing lipstick and incredible hair-dos" (Paget 1970, 389). Nevertheless, these students played an important public role in the turbulent regime change of 1965–66.

The 1966 Generation, as it was later known, left crucial legacies for subsequent generations. In later decades, almost all student activists would frame their ideas and strategies with reference to the experience of 1965–66, whether they saw themselves as continuing the traditions of that period or repudiating them. From 1966, *mahasiswa* also becomes a powerful politically loaded term, arguably even displacing *pemuda* as agents of revolutionary political change.[5] The Indonesian case is also unique among those discussed in this book insofar that the foundational tradition created in 1965–66 was a right-wing one. On campuses through much of the Asian region, the 1960s were a period of growing influence of socialist, communist, and New Left politics, and subsequent generations of student activists often developed or adapted the leftist ideologies bequeathed from this period. In Indonesia, KAMI students were fiercely anticommunist, and the bloody purges of 1965–66 ripped through Indonesian campuses—leading to the expulsion, detention, or even murder of leftists, and the closure of some ideologically tainted campuses. In contrast to the leftist views developing among student activists in many other countries, the 1966 Generation in Indonesia was ideologically diverse, with Islamic activists rubbing shoulders with devout Catholics and secular modernizers. They attacked the Sukarno government for what they saw as its corruption, extravagance, and paternalism. But most of them were profoundly elitist. Influenced by the ideas of modernization theory then emanating from North America, many of them were

distrustful of the poor, seeing themselves as part of a larger modernizing elite that would promote a new rational and development-oriented social and political order. In conditions in which the massacres of 1965–66 and subsequent military regime were destroying the capacities of workers, farmers, and other lower class groups to represent themselves politically, these students also claimed the right to speak on behalf of the people.[6]

At first sight, a survey of the subsequent history of student activism in New Order Indonesia (1965–98) suggests a relationship of outright hostility between students and the regime. Indeed, better than any other case discussed in this book, Indonesian students exemplify the "vanguard in a vacuum" thesis: in conditions in which other social and political forces were repressed, and drawing on the organizational advantages conferred by their student status and on the legitimacy that they had attained as allies of the military in 1965–66, students soon emerged as arguably *the* leading force of opposition to the regime.

This oppositional potential was demonstrated early on. As early as 1967, some students who had formerly been organized in KAMI became disillusioned with some actions of the new government and organized protests against it. In the early 1970s, small groups in Jakarta criticized the government on matters such as corruption, wasteful government spending on prestige projects, and the restricted nature of the 1971 elections. Then, even more dramatically, there were two very large waves of antigovernment student protest in 1973–74 and 1977–78. The first wave coincided with serious tension inside the governing military elite and peaked with the so-called Malari Affair on January 15, 1974, when there was widespread rioting in Jakarta (Gunawan 1975). The second wave, in 1977–78, was for the first time a truly nationwide movement, with considerable coordination between elected student councils in universities from many different provinces. The signature theme of these waves of student protest was criticism of the government's development strategy, with students accusing the government of neglecting the poor and of only benefitting foreign investors, corrupt bureaucrats, and wealthy Sino-Indonesian businesspeople. In both waves, there was also emphasis on government corruption and, especially by 1977–78, military dominance. Student protest in 1977–78 was particularly overtly antigovernment, culminating in calls by student councils for an "extraordinary session" of the People's Consultative Assembly to hold Soeharto accountable for "deviations from the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila"—a coded way to call for his removal from power (Dijk 1978, 121).

After a hiatus caused by repression, from the late 1980s and through the 1990s, campuses once again became a source of more dispersed, but even more radical, protest action.[7] By this time, campuses were truly undergoing a process of massification: according to figures released by the Ministry of Education and Culture, there were approximately 1.6 million university students by 1989–90, compared to about 225,000 in 1970.[8] The number of private universities was growing particularly fast, increasing from 63 in 1978 to 221 in 1990, with much of the increase occurring in provincial towns.[9] Unsurprisingly, students in regional centers and in private universities became more prominent in activist politics. Informal action groups replaced the formal student councils in organizing protest, because the latter groups had been emasculated by government repression. Overall, during the 1990s protest was more sporadic and dispersed than it had been in earlier decades, but it was also increasingly radical, with student protestors making increasingly unconstrained condemnations of the government and calls for thorough-going reform. A new student Left was becoming obvious and tried to build links with farmers, workers, and other groups, but so too was an increasingly powerful Islamic student movement, which, although it did not challenge the government, was quietly taking over student representative councils and occasionally showed its muscle by mobilizing in response to moral issues (such as condemnation of a state-sponsored sport lottery in 1992 and 1993).

Finally in 1998, a massive wave of student protests succeeded in precipitating a political crisis that brought down the regime of President Soeharto and forced him to resign.[10] These protests began after the 1997 Asian financial crisis began to have catastrophic effects on Indonesia, and they focused on the demand that Soeharto be removed from office and his entire regime restructured. Once again, the vacuum hypothesis is compelling because in conditions in which other political and social forces were either disabled by histories of repression, or shackled to the regime via corporatist or semicorporatist links, students possessed both the organizational muscle and the traditions of protest that other groups lacked, allowing them to spearhead what ultimately became a broad and popular protest movement against the regime. By this stage, Indonesia was well on the way to consolidated massification of the higher education system, with 3.7 million students by 2001–2,[11] giving students the clout to depict themselves by sheer weight of numbers as representatives of the people's will. This time around, student protest was not only

a truly mass phenomenon, with huge numbers participating in protest, but also a truly national one, with protests occurring not only in Jakarta and the major university towns such as Yogyakarta and Bandung but also in remote provincial and subprovincial towns in far-flung places such as Ambon and Papua. Initially, students focused on the economic crisis and called for a reduction of prices, but they quickly progressed to demanding Soeharto's resignation and the dismantling of his entire regime, something they achieved after four of them were shot dead by troops at Jakarta's Trisakti University, leading to several days of violent and destructive rioting throughout Jakarta in May 1998. It was this event that caused the regime to splinter and forced Soeharto's resignation.

In the following years—especially during the transitional regime of Soeharto's successor, B. J. Habibie (May 1998–October 1999)—there continued to be a proliferation of student protests, sometimes leading to bloody clashes with the authorities and keeping up the pressure for democratic reform. As noted in the final section of this chapter, however, as Indonesia's democratic transition progressed, the energy of student mobilizations dissipated, and students became increasingly disunited.

As this summary history suggests, the New Order authorities often repressed student activists. The first sweeping crackdown came in 1974, after Malari,when the government arrested a number of prominent students along with other dissidents. Repression occurred most decisively in 1978, when troops and tanks raided campuses and hundreds of student leaders were arrested and dozens put on trial. After this initial repression, the government also systematically tried to depoliticize campuses once and for all by way of a so-called Normalization of Campus Life policy by which student representative bodies and media were either proscribed or placed under the control of campus administrators. In the short term, this policy had the effect of dampening student protest for almost a decade, but it also had the unintended consequence of driving activists off campus and underground, where they began to experiment with more radical forms of political action.

This history also suggests that students were the opposition group par excellence of the New Order period. Apart from armed secessionists on the periphery of the state, no other group opposed the regime so consistently. They also organized public protests more consistently and on a greater scale than other groups, and they condemned the government in far more direct terms than did most other critics of the regime, such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political parties, or

religious leaders. The *pledoi*, or defense speeches, read by student leaders at dozens of trials over the New Order period chart in graphic terms the evolution of middle-class alienation from the regime and their changing debates on strategy.[12] No other group produced such a rich compendium of antiregime literature.

But despite this long history of activism and mobilization, in fact the relationship between student activism and the New Order regime was ambiguous, lasting from the formative moment of 1965–66 until the regime's demise in 1998. In some authoritarian regimes, students are in a straightforwardly antagonistic relationship with the authorities. In Burma, for example, one of the first steps that the military took after its coup in 1962 was to dynamite the student union building at the University of Rangoon. Twenty five years later, when the regime began to falter during the 1988 democracy uprising, one of its first promises was to rebuild the student union building, to right the wrong done to students at the birth of the regime. Contrast this example with Indonesia. Students played an important role in the foundation of the New Order regime. When the regime was established, army troops certainly did not dynamite any student union buildings. On the contrary, in 1965–66 troops protected the student union building in the University of Indonesia from attack by leftists, and they also guarded many important student protests. And when the regime began to crumble in the face of student protests in 1998, one of the moments of strongest symbolism came when students at the University of Indonesia painted over the placard outside the university naming it as the campus of the New Order struggle. The crumbling of the regime's legitimacy was thus not marked, as in Burma, by a gesture of reconciliation from the authorities toward students for a historic wrong. Instead, it was students who signaled their own repudiation of a regime that their predecessors had helped to establish thirty-two years earlier and whose protests had remained an important element in the regime's birth myth.

In the intervening years, although the regime often used coercion against student protesters, regime leaders equally often suggested that students could contribute to the nation or to development, and that student protests could offer valuable input. Political leaders were conscious of students' role in the foundational myth of the New Order. As a result, the government often responded more gingerly to student protest than it did to protests by other groups. At the start of the 1970s, President Soeharto himself met student protestors, and later in the decade, when large demonstrations took place, he still instructed senior ministers to

hold public hearings with the students and listen to their complaints. For about a decade after 1978, the authorities did attempt to abolish student protest, but not with the same ferocity they unleashed against other social groups (such as workers). From 1988, at the end of arguably the most repressive period of the New Order, government officials and military officers again frequently welcomed student protests as making a positive and legitimate contribution to development. Likewise, when antigovernment protests erupted on campuses in the first months of 1998, government and military leaders again tried to placate the protestors by offering dialogue (though by this time only a minority of activists took up the offer). In other words, despite the generally repressive nature of the New Order regime, even at its height there was a widespread belief, even in official circles, that students had a legitimate interest in public affairs, even if this was strictly limited. Students had a limited license to protest that was not accorded to other groups.

For students, the legacy of 1965–66 was also important more directly. The idea that students had saved the nation from collapse once before and could do so again was a recurrent, indeed ubiquitous, theme in the student newspapers and magazines that were produced on Indonesian campuses in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.[13] In the 1980s, for example, student writers often reflected that they felt burdened by their inability to live up to the great precedent established by their 1966 forebears.[14]

In summary, in terms of its lasting political impact, one of the chief legacies of this 1966 Generation was the new political meaning that came to be invested in the term *mahasiswa*, or university student. It was from this time that the idea that students represented an important political category with the capacity to save the nation in times of crisis was invented. This was a new idea. The student movement was fundamentally a product of the New Order regime and its birth pangs.

Student Identity and Coalition Building

It is already clear from the preceding section that the way the identity category "student" was constructed at the outset of the New Order regime was crucial for the subsequent trajectory of student political activity. This section elaborates on the construction of that identity over the New Order period, the characteristics with which it was conventionally imbued, and the implications this had for coalition building.

As already indicated, notions of student identity in Indonesia were to a large degree founded on the idea that students were fundamentally moral political actors. Moral force thinking was first articulated in the late 1960s and early 1970s by small groups of students and former students who had been involved in the struggle to establish the New Order in 1966. A few of them began to criticize the new government on corruption and related ideas. By about 1972–73, a fairly well developed moral force position had evolved, and by the mid-1970s it had become nearly ubiquitous in student discourse, permeating the student press and the defense speeches of student leaders in their trials in 1978–79. These ideas remained influential right to the end of the New Order, twenty years later.

To summarize briefly, four main propositions were involved in the moral force position. The first was that students should engage in politics first and foremost as students; that they form a discrete unit and should not be a part of any broader political movement or alliances, nor should they be divided among themselves. Second, students were also special in that they were uniquely morally motivated and lacked personal interests and ambition (at least, they *should* lack these things). In part this followed from students' status as intellectuals whose primary task was to seek knowledge and the truth. For this reason, third, students also embodied the national interest and could act to save the nation from those who were abusing it. They were called upon to represent the otherwise voiceless people, or as an article in a 1990 student magazine put it, "On our shoulders are born the hopes of 180 million people of Indonesia to win . . . a future which is light and free of obstacles."[15] Fourth, students' characteristic form of political action was also moral: that is, students should not be interested in acquiring wealth, status, or positions for themselves, nor (in the most extreme formulation) should they be interested in changing the personnel of government. Instead, their role was to speak out fearlessly and state moral truths that (it was supposed) the government should act upon.

The key progenitors of moral force ideas were two brothers, Soe Hok-gie and Soe Hok-djin (Arief Budiman), who were both students at the University of Indonesia, leading student activists, and fierce opponents of Sukarno in 1966. Soe Hok-gie was especially disillusioned by the subsequent consolidation of military rule and even, unlike almost all his peers, condemned the mass killings of communists. But he died while climbing a volcano in East Java in 1969 and it was his brother, Arief Budiman, who

subsequently most forcefully articulated the moral force idea, through a long series of newspaper articles, papers, and other interventions.

As John Maxwell notes, the two brothers first promoted their ideas in a series of newspaper articles in early 1967 (1997, 249). Their starting point was an apparently simple articulation of moral conviction. In one early formulation, Arief Budiman argued that since Sukarno had already been overthrown and the New Order was beginning to consolidate, students should now be "moral fighters."[16] He contrasted this view with those who argued that "struggle is only possible when we already have a relatively strong accumulation of forces":

> For instance, at the moment, we know that there are military leaders who are corrupt, that there are party leaders who are corrupt, that there are student leaders who are corrupt. What must we do? There are two responses. [First] Let them be, don't tinker with them but meanwhile nurture our forces, gather our masses. Later, if we are strong, we will attack them. The other method is to say clearly that they are corrupt. Let whatever will happen to ourselves happen, what is clear is that we will have said what is right and what is not right. (Budiman 1967a, 1)

The first choice, he said, led to people's becoming like Pavlov's dogs, who eventually accommodated themselves to the habits and commands of those in power. In circumstances when most were following this path, it was important to have people "who are brave enough to say 'NO', at a time when all the people are half-asleep, hissing 'yes . . . yes. . . . yes . . . yes . . .'" (Budiman 1967b, 2).

Moral force thinking was not merely a disinterested statement of moral views. The students and former students who were articulating the moral politics position in the late 1960s and early 1970s had themselves strongly supported the army's rise to power in 1965–66. Moral force thinking was a means to express disenchantment with the direction of the new regime, while simultaneously asserting a claim over it. Because proponents of moral force thinking felt they had a stake in the New Order, their critique was marked by a bitter, almost personal, air, but also by a lingering hope that regime leaders could be convinced by moral pressure alone.

Indeed, the early atmosphere was such that student anticorruption campaigners, including Arief Budiman, were able to organize a series of private, informal meetings with President Soeharto in July 1970. They criticized various aspects of the regime's policy and presented the president

with evidence of corrupt activities by General Soerjo, one of his close personal assistants.[17] In a *Kompas* article, Budiman described the frank and convivial atmosphere at an early meeting, saying that students concluded that Soeharto was a "man of strong principles who knows what he is doing and where he is going," although he needs to find "assistants who are capable of working with him to realize his aspirations."[18]

But the president's image was souring, with mounting evidence of corrupt activities by his family members and associates, and even by the time of a second round of meetings with student activists in August 1970, the atmosphere was far more tense.[19] Budiman reported that Soeharto was more hostile toward them, but argued that "it makes no sense for the present movement to be accused of being anti ABRI [the armed forces] or anti pak Harto [Soeharto] or anti anything at all. It is only striving to return the law to its proper place. Only that and no more."[20]

In short, Budiman and other students still wished to save the regime, not to overthrow it. In a press interview many years later, Budiman reflected on this period:

> Actually, my theory was that we could have a moral movement if there was a good *understanding* with the rulers. In 1966 I was against Bung Karno's authoritarianism. And I saw Pak Harto as a friend, as a *savior*. At that time I really trusted him. Well, later my hypothesis was that Pak Harto, as the center of power, was actually good, it was just that he was surrounded by corrupt assistants. So we concluded that, if only we could communicate with the center of power, then we could resolve the problem. So that is when we formed the moral movement. In other words, we did not want to form a force, but rather wished to communicate with someone we trusted. So we just threw forth an issue and if the government caught the issue, then it would mean that our job would be finished.[21]

In short, moral force thinking originated not simply as part of an oppositional trend among students. It was motivated not only by their disillusionment with the regime but also by their lingering sympathy for it. The moral language in which they phrased their critique was thus characteristic of what this author has elsewhere called dissidence, and what Mark Thompson calls revisionist criticism: namely, a posture of criticizing a regime while simultaneously professing loyalty to its foundational ideals and trying to bring about change via moral suasion rather than confrontation. This mode is characteristic of elite opposition early in an authoritarian regime's life cycle (Aspinall 2005; Thompson 2009).

Over the following years, even as student protestors became progressively more disillusioned with and condemnatory of the New Order, moral force ideas continued to have an impact. For example, despite the greater militancy of students in 1977–78, as Max Lane argues, students did not entirely break with the New Order but instead argued it had been an initially sound system later corrupted by its leaders. They also expressed loyalty to its core symbols (Lane 1991, 3–4). Thus, one of the defining slogans of 1977–78 was the call for the military to "return to the people." Students were still hostile to mass politics and had paternalistic attitudes toward the common people, often expressed as repudiation of chaos or anarchy (e.g., *White Book* 1978, 166). Most activists still insisted their role was to provide *koreksi* (correction) and *peringatan* (reminders) to those in power.[22] Importantly, throughout the 1970s students did not attempt at all to build alliances with nonstudent groups, such as workers, farmers, or the urban poor—an approach that was already influential among more radical students in the region at this time, such as those in Thailand or the Philippines.

In the 1980s and 1990s—following the more extensive repression of student activism from the late 1970s—some student activists did try to mobilize marginalized social groups (notably disenfranchised farmers and land owners, and industrial workers). Some of the students involved in this radicalization explicitly repudiated moral force ideas and tried to delegitimize what they called the "myths of 1966."[23] These students achieved a level of leftist militancy that was unparalleled in the history of the New Order, a development that peaked with the formation of the Partai Rakyat Demokratik (People's Democratic Party) in 1996. These students played an important catalytic role in prompting a new mood of antiregime mobilization, reconnecting student activism with the leftist and populist traditions of the early 1960s and revolution in the process. But they were unable to build a truly mass-based revolutionary movement, as were their colleagues in the Philippines.

Despite the reemergence of a student left, the moral force tradition did not disappear, but it resurfaced in the mass student protests of 1998 that succeeded in bringing down Soeharto and ending his New Order regime. Some student protestors, continuing the left-wing tendency that had appeared in the late 1980s, tried to mobilize nonstudent groups in their protests, with some success. Others spoke in classic moral force terminology and insisted that their struggle was pure and should not be polluted by alliances with other groups (Hadiz 1999, 111–12). Many

groups tried to physically maintain the purity of their protests by separating themselves (with marshals, ropes, and similar techniques) from bystanders and members of the general public.

Tellingly, in 1998–99 even some of the most militant students had difficulty in dealing with the question of political power, in the sense of articulating a view about who should be in government. Thus many of the more militant groups in 1998 fought for the formation of a transitional government that would replace the current government and be thoroughly purged of New Order figures (against the views of regime leaders, who argued for a reformulated version of the government, minus Soeharto), but these groups often were strikingly ambiguous on what groups or interests should be represented in such a transitional government. Consider, for example, the following response to a journalist's question by Jerry Sarimole—an activist from the City Forum (Forum Kota, Forkot), one of the more important activist coalitions of 1998—when he was asked how an Indonesian People's Committee (Forkot's version of the transitional government) could be formed:

> People Power. It must be the mass movements [simpul-simpul massa] that mobile to bring down the regime. Each group must sit down to discuss the fate of the nation. As for Forkot, we position ourselves as the one calling out, "Hey, there's a problem! Sit down together and solve it!" Forkot, or us students, are not interested in sitting down and making the political decisions, nor do we have any ambition to become the rulers. No, we are just making a moral call. The Indonesian People's Committee, or whatever we call it, will not have any students from Forkot in it.[24]

Thus, student activists at the end of the New Order who had developed a militantly antigovernment position still integrated elements of the moral force thinking that had originated in the early New Order, notably the characterization of their own actions as moral rather than political and an aversion to direct involvement in the polluting world of politics. There was a clear logic to this outcome: students qua students, no matter how radical, no matter how far-reaching their political goals and aims, could never remove or replace a government. Student activists know they are a narrow group, even when they claim to speak on behalf of the nation, and they also know they lack the skills and experience required to run a state. They thus do not aim to take over government themselves, even when they are in a position to threaten to destroy a government or to catalyze a movement that can do so. As a result, when a student

movement constitutes itself *as* a student movement, it is in some senses necessarily agnostic on the question of who will occupy political office. Moral force thinking transformed this necessity into a virtue by asserting that students' purity would be traduced if they considered such matters too deeply. It allowed them to sidestep the issue of governmental power. This ambivalent relationship with political power helps to explain why moral force thinking showed such staying power in Indonesia, beginning in a movement of mild disillusionment with the New Order among its early supporters and surviving even among some radical opponents of the regime in its dying days.

Impact of Regime Type: Moral Force Thinking in Response to Coercion and Co-optation

A moral force posture is not unique to Indonesia. Observers of student movements in many other countries have identified similar patterns of thought and behavior. Student protestors in China and Taiwan, for instance, have often put great emphasis on the moral foundations and purity of their movements, and they have sometimes also been reluctant to ally with other groups. In the 1989 student movement in China, for instance, students "often set picket lines to prevent other elements of the Beijing population from joining their demonstrations" (Zhao 2000, 1593), a practice that was remarkably similar to that of many Indonesian students in 1998.

That similar features are found in student activism elsewhere suggests that it is not merely Indonesian students' role in the establishment of the regime in 1965–66, and how this role was reproduced in subsequent discourse on student identity, that accounts for the moral framing of student activism in Indonesia. Similar framing is found in countries where students did not play a valorized role in the foundation of the regime. In scholarly literature, explanations for such moral framing of student activism have tended to be expressed in terms of debate over whether traditional political ideas and culture best explains it, or whether it is better understood as a rational response to the threat of coercion. Teresa Wright has argued persuasively for the second approach in her book on student protests in China and Taiwan in 1989. As she explains (Wright 2001, 5), "Student concern with maintaining the 'purity' of their ranks also derived from their fear of repression. Knowledge of past accusations of movement infiltration by 'outside influences' in the party-controlled

media, as well as the party's discriminatory use of force to quell dissent by certain social groups (workers in the case of China; the Democratic Progressive Party in the case of Taiwan) made students hesitant to allow nonstudents into their protest ranks." Indonesia also provides evidence for this view. The structure of the authoritarian regime, its patterns of relations with society, and the methods it used to control potential dissent helped to produce the moral force thinking that distinguished student activism in the country. In this regard, two features of the New Order regime were crucial.

First, and most importantly, moral force thinking was a response to the threat of coercion that was an ever-present reality for antigovernment student activists. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when such thinking first appeared, the New Order regime was radically restructuring the political system. The military tried to proscribe overt opposition and to make anathema the very idea that the regime could be fundamentally changed. Students knew that if they criticized the government too directly their demonstrations would be broken up and they might be arrested. The idea that student activism was moral and not political was thus partly defensive: it allowed student activists to express their criticisms of the government while denying that they wanted to remove it or that they were motivated by links to any wider political forces. Once the first generation of New Order student activists created the moral force idea, it was then reinforced by constant warnings by army officers and government officials that if students were *ditunggangi* (literally: ridden) or *disususpi* (infiltrated) by (usually unnamed) political interests, then their activities would no longer be tolerated. Very often, regime leaders suggested it was oppositional and underground political forces that were trying to infiltrate student protest (extreme right socialists and modernist Muslims in 1974, communists in the 1990s), but often it also was implied that it was disgruntled elements in the military officer corps that were trying to do so.[25] The very ideal of a cohesive student movement—a movement that represented a substantial force in its own right and as a discrete entity—was in other words partly a product of military attempts to disarticulate and disable oppositional coalition building.

Secondly, the moral force idea arose partly as a reaction against pressures to co-opt student activists. From the start of the New Order regime, bitter fights occurred when the government tried to draw student activists or former student activists into its ranks. This was a crucial part of the context for the genesis of moral forces ideas. As Maxwell notes, when Arief

Budiman and Soe Hok-gie first popularized these ideas in 1967, they were writing in response to the appointment by Soeharto of fourteen student activists to Indonesia's parliament (1997, 249). Maxwell traces the origin of the moral force concept to a radio broadcast by Soe Hok-gie in April 1966, which compared the role of students to "an example from popular Western movie culture, that of Shane the lone cowboy who arrives to defend the townspeople against the bandits who have been robbing, raping and pillaging the district. After the bandits have been challenged and eliminated and while the townspeople are discussing the rewards they intend to shower on their benefactor, Shane quietly rides out of town into the hills" (1997, 249n23). Soe Hok-gie's point was that students should not stay around to enjoy the perquisites of power now on offer from the New Order: moral force ideas were as much admonition to students themselves as they were an appeal to the authorities. The point was prescient because many of the 1966 student activists who were contemporaries of the two brothers later moved into the very highest echelons of the New Order government, becoming ministers or attaining other senior appointments.

In itself such an outcome is not surprising. In all countries, student activism provides an apprenticeship for participation in other forms of (adult) political activity. It is not unusual for idealistic student activists to eventually turn up as pragmatic or even corrupted cabinet ministers. In Indonesia, this tendency has been particularly marked. The experience of studying at university, and affiliating to student organizations while there, has been a transmission belt on a massive scale into the bureaucracy and the governing elite, as part of what John Sidel calls the "centrality of educational institutions in mediating and reproducing relations of inequality and domination" in the country (2001, 114). The New Order regime developed a corporatist model for controlling and co-opting all manner of social groups, and students were no exception. An array of tolerated student organizations, most of which had their origins in the large groups that were affiliated to (anticommunist) political parties in the 1950s and 1960s, survived through the New Order years by compromising with and accommodating to the regime. These included the association for Catholic students (Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia, PMKRI), Protestant students (Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia, GMKI), nationalist students (GMNI), and the major modernist Islamic group, HMI. Their alumni formed an important part of the New Order elite: in 1997, the magazine *Ummat* estimated that around two hundred of the five hundred members of the DPR (Indonesia's

national parliament) had backgrounds in HMI, the regime-tolerated Islamic Students' Association.[26]

Occasionally leaders of these groups made mild criticisms of the New Order government, but their main function was to provide an all-encompassing experience for students: leadership training, social activities, friendship networks, religious activities, and the like, much of which could be turned to the advantage of individual members in their search for postuniversity careers. Crucially, they were also connected to patron-client networks that stretched into the regime, usually via alumni who were important political patrons and who could help members find jobs and other economic opportunities. Thus, for example, rivals for the HMI leadership often were backed by different powerful patrons who were former HMI members who could provide direct access to centers of politicobureaucratic power and the financial resources this implied.[27]

Leaders of groups such as HMI themselves used moral force language to downplay the threat they represented to the New Order government. Other students, however, used the same ideas to reject the HMI model of vertical alliances with, and recruitment into, the political elite. Hence, for example, in late 1998 when Forkot was accused of being a tool of various elite opponents of Habibie, it responded in the following terms: "The unfounded issue or opinion that says that the City Forum has relations with, or is an extension of, such groups is not true. Forkot is an independent student alliance, which is non-cooperative, and has no patron-client relations with any group whatsoever nor with any member of the elite, whoever they may be."[28] Even after the end of the Soeharto era, therefore, we see students repeating some of the basic arguments that had underpinned moral force thinking from the beginning. Forkot students here reject in blanket terms the notion that they are allied with other political players, not only as a response to threats of repression (as was undoubtedly part of the story here), but also as part of a puritanical rejection of all links with those in power.

In summary, the moral politics posture was not merely a product of Indonesia's distinctive history, nor was it simply a response to students' inability to imagine themselves seizing power. It was also a defense against the combination of coercion and co-optation that the New Order regime leveled against all potential opponents. By arguing they were moral actors, uncontaminated by the political calculations, students could both try to deflect accusations that they harbored sinister designs against the regime and inoculate themselves against its blandishments.

Conclusion: Beyond Authoritarianism, Beyond Student Activism

This chapter traced the origins, evolution, and lingering influence of a set of ideas loosely grouped under the rubric of moral force thinking. At its simplest, the moral force idea suggests that students lack political interests and ambitions, and they are instead motivated only by moral considerations. A related notion is student separatism: because students' struggle is pure, it should not be polluted by alliances with other groups. Finally, and perhaps, most basically of all (though it is rarely expressed explicitly) is the idea that students should engage in politics above all *as students* and that students constitute a potentially cohesive and very effective category of political actor in their own right.

Though this chapter has argued that these ideas were in large part a product of repression, they were also very powerful. They help to explain why students continually reemerged as one of the most, if not *the* most, important oppositional groups during the New Order period. The ideas also helped lay the ideological groundwork for the mass student mobilizations of 1998, when students did succeed in beginning a series of events that brought about the collapse of the Soeharto regime—surely one of the most important and consequential waves of student protest in modern history.

Yet student activism also was intimately linked to the history of authoritarianism. This is borne out by what has happened after the 1998 democratization. The idea that students have an important role to play in political life received a great initial boost from the 1998 overthrow of Soeharto. Here was visible reaffirmation, or so it seemed, that students had the power to bring about major political change. However, since this initial victory, there has been an unfolding of schism and disorientation among student activist groups, complete with the emergence of small puritanical groups that claim the mantle of true representatives of the "spirit of '98" and recriminations about betrayal, as some former activists are recruited by political parties or powerful patrons. This atmosphere is reminiscent of the climate of schism that followed the 1966 student movement. However, now the political context is very different. In the late 1960s, students confronted a sterile political landscape and a regime that prohibited most forms of political action. Students could claim they helped bring the New Order into being and so could buy a limited license to protest not given to other groups. This was the context in which an emphasis on student purity and independence arose.

The end of the Soeharto regime, in contrast, saw dramatic political

liberalization and proliferation of other forms of political activity. The students' renewed legitimacy marked the beginning of the end of their special status. As Dave McRae puts it, "Ironically, the students' legitimacy marked a decline in their influence, as they became just one more pressure group, albeit at times a powerful one" (2001, 62). In the post-Soeharto period, there thus have been outbursts of protest when students have attempted to reprise their 1998 role (such as large demonstrations against price rises in early 2003). Nevertheless, among the student Left, the general pattern has been one of increasing ultraradicalism among increasingly small and divided groups that are largely separated from the unresponsive populace they claim to represent (Lee 2008).

Overall, however, the stress on student uniqueness and cohesion has been subsumed by particularistic links to varying causes. One major division famously surfaced among student protestors on the very day after the resignation of Soeharto, with some modernist Muslim students viewing Soeharto's successor Habibie as legitimate while more radical and secular ones pressed for his overthrow. This split was a harbinger of more splits to come. A similar division was replayed, in even more bitter terms, when President Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency entered crisis in 2000 and 2001—although this time the alignment was reversed with the modernist Muslims in groups such as HMI and the BEM (Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa [Student Executive Body]) calling for Abdurrahman's removal, while the radical activist coalitions such as Forkot tended to defend him. More seriously, there was a tremendous reorientation of student activists' energies toward different forms of political and social activity, ranging from religious *dakwah*-style political parties (most prominently, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera [Prosperous Justice Party]), groups campaigning on land and labor issues and, in the extreme case, ethnonationalist mobilization in Aceh and Papua. The idea that there was or even could be a cohesive Indonesian student movement that shared a single set of interests and goals slowly evaporated.

These shifts in and fracturing of student energies reinforce points made earlier about the role of coercion in shaping moral force thinking and even giving rise to the very idea of the student movement. Under the New Order, the threat of coercion set important outer limits on how student activists could articulate their goals. Students reiterated their role in establishing the regime to claim a special political license. The state tolerated moral force ideas to a degree not accorded to more overt ideologies of resistance. These ideas allowed students to express constrained forms of resistance to the regime and even valorized the student role as being

crucial to the well-being of the nation. Once established in this way, moral force thinking became self-regenerating and largely shaped the political identity and thinking of succeeding generations of activists.

The idea that students constituted a discrete political force, able to act as a cohesive unit and bearing a distinct set of interests that are defined as being not personal but in defense of the nation, was always a myth. Even at the height of the New Order period, students were divided into various political and social groupings with different aims. Nevertheless, the notion that students were national saviors ultimately proved to be a powerful myth and one that contributed greatly to the mobilizations that brought the New Order regime to an end. Post-Soeharto developments, however, suggest that this myth may have above all been a product of the repressive conditions under the New Order.

Notes

1. This is not a direct quotation of the governor, but a paraphrasing of him by the journalist who wrote the article "Isu Tolak Pemilu Warnai Rakernas BEM," *Media Indonesia*, February 10, 2004. We should therefore perhaps put aside the confusion of 1908 (foundation of the protonationalist organization Budi Utomo, celebrated in nationalist histories as marking the birth of Indonesian nationalism) and 1928 (the date of the Sumpah Pemuda), which may have been an error by the journalist rather than the governor.
2. For comments by Maksun Djatmiko, the head of social-political affairs for the BEM of Universitas Indonesia, see "Mahasiswa Harus Tetap di Luar Sistem," *Media Indonesia*, February 11, 2004.
3. By mid-1967, HMI claimed a membership of more than 150,000 (see Douglas 1970, 183).
4. By the early 1960s, the Communist Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (CGMI) was the largest student organization in Jakarta (see Douglas 1970, 131).
5. The partial displacement of *pemuda* by *mahasiswa* reflected the narrowing class basis of politics in the New Order years and the greater value that the regime placed on modernization and technocracy rather than on the country's revolutionary heritage. The term *mahasiswa* also was gradually invested with meaning as a category embodying the old *pemuda* ethos of struggle precisely at the same time that the older term became associated with the *premanisme* (gansgsterism) of groups such as Pemuda Pancasila or the careerism of New Order outfits such as the Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (KNPI or National Committee of Indonesian Youths), the regime's umbrella organization for youth groups. See Ryter 1998 and 2002 for discussion of the politics of *pemuda* during the New Order.
6. On the modernizing outlook of students and other intellectuals at this time see Raillon 1984 and William 1973.

7. On the student activism of the 1980s and early 1990s, see Aspinall 1993, 1995, and 2005, chapter 5.
8. *Direktori Perguruan Tinggi Swasta di Indonesia 1990/1991*, 1991, ix (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan); Thomas 1973, 248.
9. *Daftar dan Status Perguruan Tinggi Swasta di Indonesia Tahun 1978, 1979* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi); *Statistik Perguruan Tinggi Swasta Tahun 1990/1991, 1993* (Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Pusat Informatika).
10. On the 1998 protests, see, for example, Aspinall 1999 and McRae 2001.
11. Table of Number of Institutions, New Students, Student Enrollments, Graduates, and Lecturers by Province from the Department of National Education's website: http://www.depdiknas.go.id
12. Two pledoi translated into English are Heri Akhmadi, 1981, *Breaking the Chains of Oppression of the Indonesian People* [Defense statement at his trial on charges of insulting the head of state (Bandung, Idn. June 7–10, 1979)], Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Translation Series (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University), and M. Jumhur Hidayat (an Institut Teknologi Bandung student arrested in 1989), "The Life of the Indonesian People in an Anti-Democratic Environment," Indonesia News Service, no. 260 (September 6, 1990): 1–8; no. 261 (September 8, 1990); no. 285 (March 22, 1991), 1–7.
13. For a searching analysis of discourse in student newspapers and magazines, see Jackson 2005.
14. See, for example, Mangiang 1981.
15. "Jalan masih panjang, angkatan termuda," *Ganesha*, no. 3 (August): 11–12.
16. This formulation was best expressed in a series of articles Arief Budiman wrote for the Protestant daily *Sinar Harapan* on September 23, 26, and 27, 1967. The articles were titled "Sebuah Pendapat Ttg. Organisasi KAMI: Mahasiswa Seharusnja Djadi Pedjuang Moral" (An opinion about the KAMI organization: Students should become moral fighters).
17. Soeharto had several meetings with student delegations. See reports of meetings on July 14 (*Kompas*, July 15, 1970), July 18 (*Kompas*, July 20, 1970), August 1 (*Kompas*, August 3, 1970), and August 13 (*Indonesia Raya*, August 14, 1970).
18. *Kompas*, July 20, 1970, translated in Smith 1974 as "A Conversation with Pak Harto," 225–28. The president dismissed all his assistants so that he could meet the students in private. He made statements, according to Budiman, with which the students disagreed (such as suggesting that a "quiet approach" was best for dealing with corruption). However, Budiman was also even able to directly (but politely) admonish the president for failing to take a personal and public lead in anticorruption campaigns.
19. "Presiden Soeharto Adjak KAK Djangan Berpisah Djalan," *Kompas*, August 3, 1970.
20. Arief Budiman, "Sesudah Dua Kali Bertemu Pak Harto," *Kompas*, August 8, 1970.
21. *Editor*, November 24, 1994, 36. Italicized words were in English in the original.
22. This paragraph is drawn from Aspinall 2005, 119.

23. See, for example, Akhmad 1989.
24. Jerry Sarimole, "Aktifis Forum Kota: 'Duduklah Bersama dan Pecahkan!!,'" *Xpos*, no. 37/I/12, September 18, 1998 (distributed electronically by *Siarlist*).
25. This idea had its origins in the Malari period, when many students looked to General Soemtiro as a potential supporter and rival to Soeharto.
26. "Daftar Harapan Sementara (DHS) Untuk Manuver HMI," *Ummat*, August 4, 1997.
27. It was widely believed, for example, that rival candidates for the HMI leadership at its 1997 congress were backed by different government patrons: Fuad Bawazier, the director-general of taxation, who was close to the president's children, and the state minister of people's housing, Akbar Tandjung. "Politik Dagang Sapi di HMI," *Suara Independen*, September 1997.
28. "Forkot Diisukan Negatif," *Suara Pembaruan*, October 2, 1998.

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7 BURMA: A HISTORIC FORCE, FORCEFULLY MET

WIN MIN

Unlike other Asian countries, Burma was under extremely repressive military-dominated governments from 1962 until 2011. However, organized opposition movements have repeatedly emerged. In most of these, Burmese university students have been in the vanguard, as one of the main social groups fighting for political, economic, and social change. Yet their role has been increasingly restricted as successive military-led governments have adapted their policies in response. While students led the country's largest political movement in 1988, toppling the military-backed one-party state, a subsequent military coup brought a new regime to power that crushed the demonstrations and killed thousands (Smith 1999, 16). This unprecedented repression and the increased restrictions that followed constrained future student activism. Thus monks, not students, led large-scale 2007 demonstrations, although students were still among the many groups participating.

The emergence of student activism in Burma has been shaped by three primary factors. The first is the sort of political vacuum referenced in the introduction in which normally prominent actors in society are not in a position to lead or initiate an opposition movement. The second is the historical legacy of earlier student activists that motivated subsequent generations. The third is a strong corporate student identity, which has prompted fellow students to come to the aid of their peers facing violent or unfair treatment by authorities. Burmese university student activists also have regularly sought to coordinate with other groups in society to build up and sustain the momentum of mass protests. Nevertheless, the possibility of coordination is largely dependent on the emergence of a political opportunity. When the regime imposed consistent and highly oppressive measures preventing the development

of opposition structures and institutions, and especially at the height of such repression, it was difficult for student activists to sustain large-scale political movements.

By eliminating or undermining structures and institutions that facilitate student mobilization, military authorities disrupted student activism and forced it to go underground. Underground activists found it difficult to coordinate their efforts, and repressive measures also led some students to give up activism altogether. At the same time, Burma's isolation from the international community has meant that New Left movements in other countries and the rise of student activism in the region have had little effect on student activism in Burma.

Taking a historical perspective, this chapter proposes that the repressive measures employed by Burma's military authorities shaped the nature and scope of student activism in the country. After providing historical background on student activism in Burma since colonial times, this chapter will examine the factors contributing to the emergence of student activism after independence and then analyze the factors influencing cooperation and coordination between students and other actors in society. The analysis concludes with an assessment of how military-dominated governments have affected the nature and scope of Burma's student activism.

History of Student Activism in Burma

As in China, Burmese student activism emerged during the anticolonial struggle, but it has persisted through dramatically different regimes since. Students played a leading role in anticolonial resistance amid a vacuum of formal political opposition in the 1920s and 1930s. In the process, they developed both a strong corporate identity and a legacy for students' later political engagement, either alone or in coordination with other actors. Moreover, their efforts had real political impact. That legacy undergirded students' continuing engagement in the short-lived democratic period after independence, as well as continuing, less fruitful efforts under military-led governments since then. The constants throughout have been students' belief in the appropriateness of their engaging in politics—and their engaging collectively as students, even if in conjunction with other social forces—and resistance by the state (particularly in its more authoritarian guises) against that involvement.

Burmese students' initial focus in the interwar years was on students' rights. In 1920, they organized the first demonstration against British education policy.[1] Subsequently, students set up 150 informal national schools, which promoted Burmese nationalism and provided a gathering space for the emerging anticolonial movement (Aung Tun 2007, 18). The formation of independent student unions—the Rangoon University Students' Union in 1931 and the All Burma Students' Union (ABSU) in 1936—provided formal structures to better mobilize collective action (Maung Maung 1989, 6). Aung San, later Burma's independence hero, was the first general secretary of the ABSU. In 1936, students organized a strike after British authorities expelled him as well as fellow student leader U Nu (later elected prime minister) for publishing anticolonial articles. Ultimately, after this show of solidarity, the British agreed not to expel the student demonstrators.

After the 1936 strike, students debated whether to remain involved in politics. The majority decided to participate in the independence movement. Aung San was among those who supported students' political involvement; he joined other radical students in the We-Burmans Association (Aung Tun 2007, 171). Meanwhile, the student unions coordinated with monks, workers, and farmers. Former student leaders, too, set up study groups that taught nationalism, Marxism, and socialism. In 1938, oil industry workers' participation in a student-initiated protest resulted in Burma's largest demonstrations yet. These demonstrations were, however, brutally suppressed, with eighteen demonstrators killed in Rangoon and Mandalay (Aung Tun 2007, 190, 202).

The anticolonial movement used both nonviolent tactics and armed struggle, establishing another precedent. After the 1938 crackdown, Aung San and other student and youth leaders, who believed nonviolence alone would not work, secretly traveled to Japan to receive military training. They formed a small army, which later became the national army, and fought together with Japanese troops to drive the British out in 1941. When the Japanese refused to grant Burma full independence, the Burmese switched sides and worked with the British against the Japanese. After the war, Aung San declared that he was prepared to launch a mass movement if the British refused to grant independence. The British were compelled to negotiate. In 1948, Burma gained independence—an

achievement that many generations of students since have credited in large part to their predecessors.

The Democratic Era (1948–62)

Despite the introduction of parliamentary democracy at independence, the Communist Party of Burma and various ethnic groups soon took up arms against the central government. Students, however, generally won concessions from the authorities, including Prime Minister U Nu, through dialogue, without resort to more strident means (Aung Tun 2007, 341). As legal political parties were able to operate under democratic rule, students were no longer needed to fill a political vacuum, but student activism continued regardless, focused on both student and political party issues. The student activists held most of their meetings at Rangoon University's historic student union building. The student union also cooperated with farmers' and workers' unions, including inviting representatives to student meetings and attending their meetings in return. The student union also sent delegations to international student conferences and received visits from international student leaders (Aung Tun 2007, 352).

However, student activists were divided along party lines, with some groups allied with the ruling party, some with the opposition party, and some with the armed communist group. In 1951, the ABSU tried to reorganize itself based on student neutrality, but a pro-Left group of students split off to form the All Burma Federation of Students' Union (ABFSU). Over time, the ABFSU became more effective at organizing students, while the ABSU gradually disappeared. To counter the increasing influence of leftists over student unions, the ruling party created its own student organization (Aung Tun 2007, 335). Meanwhile, the political situation was in flux; matters soon took a dramatic turn, pulling students into a new, more radical phase as well.

Military Rule (1962–88)

In 1962, the Burmese military staged a coup, claiming increased ethnic demands for autonomy had brought the country to the verge of disintegration. Military leaders restricted civilian organizations, creating a vacuum of political opposition that was filled mostly by students. Army Chief General Ne Win established the Revolutionary Council (1962–74) of

military officers, followed by a one-party Socialist government (1974–88) led by retired military officers. Ne Win exploited the popularity socialism had gained during Burma's independence struggle to strengthen his claim for military rule. The junta jailed many political leaders and outlawed all political parties and independent unions. Highly censored, state-controlled media replaced independent media outlets. The junta also expanded its military intelligence branch to spy on dissidents and student activists. The regime introduced a state-controlled economy and nationalized all businesses, driving out foreign investors and isolating the country. It established its own youth (mostly students'), workers', and farmers' associations in order to control the social sphere.

It was students who first emerged within this vacuum to oppose military rule. Contrary to Indonesia, where Soeharto's regime treated students as allies at the outset of military rule, Burma's junta responded antagonistically to student protests against new campus regulations and military control over the governing bodies of Rangoon University. The army not only shot at student demonstrators, who numbered in the hundreds, but also dynamited the student union building, killing at least seventeen students and injuring or arresting dozens more (Silverstein 1977, 111). Soon after, Ne Win stated that if the military were challenged, it would respond with force and "fight sword with sword and spear with spear."[2] Universities were then closed for four months to prevent further demonstrations. This set a precedent for dealing with student protests by responding with force and school closures rather than negotiations. It also showed the regime's aim of dismantling "structures and institutions that supported student protests" (Boudreau 2004, 9).

Formal on-campus student organizations and activities were purposely eliminated. Some student activists set up small underground units, while others joined the armed Communist Party in the jungle. Underground units of around ten people each survived in different forms, such as study groups and small library associations in which members read left-leaning novels and biographies. These units remained unconnected due to fear of surveillance, thus preventing them from becoming a larger network and a potential mobilizing structure. Instead, they tried to survive and spread a spirit of student activism by distributing underground pamphlets on campus while waiting for conditions to provoke the people to mobilize or to join student-led demonstrations.[3] In 1969, angry because they did not get tickets to the Southeast Asian Peninsula Games, some students did organize protests. The military quickly ended

these by shooting at protestors, who numbered in the hundreds, and closing the universities.

Due to the severity of this repression, it took several years before subsequent cohorts of students were willing to organize protests again. In the mid-1970s, student demonstrations spontaneously reemerged in response to government political and economic mismanagement. The Burmese economy, which had thrived during the democratic period, experienced lagging growth in the 1960s. Severe economic problems emerged then in the 1970s, the result of poor development strategies. Some student activists coordinated with workers who initiated demonstrations in mid-1974 to protest food shortages and price hikes.[4] A few thousand people participated in the demonstrations, and the military responded harshly, killing twenty-two worker activists and arresting dozens more (Silverstein 1977, 141). This violent military repression left no political opportunity for students or workers to coordinate with any other actors in society.

However, in late 1974, students organized demonstrations when the body of former U.N. Secretary General U Thant was returned to Burma. Ne Win had planned a simple funeral, but student activists respected U Thant highly and demanded a state funeral. In the end, thousands of university students took the body to Rangoon University and organized their own funeral on the site of the destroyed student union building. Again, the government suppressed the movement. At least sixteen people were killed and dozens of demonstrators were arrested (Silverstein 1977, 143). In mid-1975, hundreds of students joined protests marking the anniversary of the 1974 workers' strike, and in 1976, a few thousand students organized a demonstration to mark the centennial of famed nationalist author Thakin Kodaw Hmaing's birth. All three of these demonstrations were suppressed by force, leaving participants no opening through which to broaden them. Some student activists had to go underground, as in the 1960s, but survived. They distributed underground literature to subsequent generations of students, waiting for another opportune moment.

It took more than a decade for students to organize further demonstrations. In late 1987, students initiated small-scale protests over the government's abrupt demonetization of major bank notes, a source of intense grievance across the country. At the same time, many were angered to learn Burma had been deemed a Least Developed Country by the United Nations, despite the country's richness in natural

resources. Authorities managed temporarily to suppress the protests through force and the closure of universities. However, student demonstrations broke out again when the universities were reopened in 1988 and drew up to a few thousand participants. The government responded by killing two students and expelling many others.

This time students felt they could coordinate with other actors in society because of an emerging political opportunity: Ne Win publicly apologized for his mismanagement and resigned, along with a number of close aides, in July 1988.[5] On July 7, the anniversary of the 1962 demolition of the student union building. Ne Win released students detained in March and June 1988. Given their weak institutional capacity to coordinate and mobilize others, some student activists used the foreign media (especially the BBC's Burmese service) to call for nationwide demonstrations on August 8, 1988 (a date later remembered by activists as 8-8-88).

Ne Win had warned in his nationally televised resignation speech on July 23, 1988, that the army would "shoot straight to hit" if people demonstrated again.[6] Indeed, when demonstrations, involving thousands of people, broke out on August 8 in Rangoon, soldiers killed more than one hundred demonstrators in four days. However, the demonstrations spread to cities and towns throughout the country, with millions of demonstrators joining in. Faced with a crisis, the hard-line leader who had replaced Ne Win resigned, the army retreated to the barracks, and a civilian soft-line leader came in.

Thus many people believed that the moment was ripe for mobilization since the army would no longer be able to crack down and the Socialist Party's leadership was in crisis. In fact, the army was unprepared to cope with the massive demonstrations that had already spread to most parts of the country. With less fear of being arrested or killed, civil servants stopped working, and many more people joined the demonstrations and began organizing. Demonstrations calling for multiparty democracy spread across Burma. The civilian president could not stop the demonstrations, although he promised to hold multiparty elections, leading to the collapse of the socialist government. However, after six weeks, the military managed to regroup and staged a coup. It ended the demonstrations by force, killing thousands of demonstrators. At the same time, the generals felt that they had to appease the public to reduce radicalization and further demonstrations. They, therefore, promised to hold the elections.

Military Rule and Military-Backed Government (1988–Present)

After the 1988 coup, the military established a junta called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997. The junta banned independent organizations, including the student unions and independent media that had reemerged during the 1988 uprising. Many student activists went underground, while others fled to armed ethnic groups' territories. In addition, to prevent renewed demonstrations, gatherings of five or more people were declared illegal and media censorship was tightened. While the military allowed political parties to form, after the election, the junta did not transfer power to the winning National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi. However, after 1988, legal political parties, and especially the NLD, took the vanguard role in place of students. Some student activists joined the NLD's youth wing, while others established alternative political parties to continue their activities.

The junta again targeted the structures and institutions of student activism with a combination of tactics. As detailed later, authorities shut down many universities for three years to prevent further student demonstrations, despite the cost to development in terms of lost education. When universities reopened, students faced increased surveillance. The most prominent opposition leaders from 1988 were detained, including student leader Min Ko Naing (sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment) and democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi (who was only released in 1995 and then later rearrested).

Despite the regime's efforts to prevent student activism's reemergence, it did not end. In 1990, underground students in Mandalay organized a commemorative ceremony on the second anniversary of the 8-8-88 demonstrations, and hundreds of people, mostly monks and students, attended.[7] The military killed some monks who participated, leading to a monastic boycott whereby monks refused to accept donations from members of the military or their families.[8] To end the boycott, the military raided the main monasteries involved, arresting more than one hundred monks. Students also organized another demonstration in Rangoon in 1991 when Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and hundreds joined. The authorities responded by arresting a dozen demonstrators. In 1996, thousands of university students in Rangoon again staged a demonstration that spread to a few universities in

a few other towns, this time calling for improved education. Again the regime responded forcefully, arresting more than one hundred students.

After the 1996 demonstration, most universities were closed anew, this time for four years. In 1998, when some universities reopened for a few days to hold examinations, students in Rangoon held a small demonstration to show support for the elected politicians' call to convene the 1990 parliament. However, it was quickly crushed. Student leaders were arrested and given lengthy prison sentences. One student leader was sentenced to fifty-three years' imprisonment. Following that, the regime relocated many universities outside of urban centers and encouraged distance education programs to make it difficult for students to organize protests. The worsening economic situation also had forced students to take distance courses, so they could work while studying. As a result, student activism declined precipitously. Between then and 2007, only Aung San Suu Kyi's 2003 tour of upper Burma drew large crowds into the streets.

In 2007, the largest demonstrations since 1988 took place. Student leaders from 1988 initiated them, including Min Ko Naing and a number of others who had been in prison. In 2005, they had set up an informal, aboveground organization called the 88 Generation Students' Group. Later, they initiated low-risk activities such as petitions calling for the release of political prisoners and asking people to write letters with their complaints and concerns to the regime's top leader, General Than Shwe. In 2007—when the junta removed gas subsidies, severely impacting people's daily lives—the 88 Generation Students' Group launched street marches that a few hundred people joined. However, the leaders were quickly arrested. Monks then took their place.

Thousands of monks peacefully marched through the streets of Rangoon and other cities, including Mandalay, Sittwe, and Pakokku, and chanted Buddhist verses calling for compassion. Tens of thousands of people, mostly young people, joined them. They sought to persuade the regime both to recognize the impact of its policies on the poor and address the welfare of Burmese citizens, and to begin a dialogue with the NLD. University students composed only about 10 percent of all participants in the 2007 demonstrations. Most student activists who urged others to join had connections to former students involved in the 1996 or 1988 protests.

Unlike in 1988, the demonstrations did not spread to the whole country, due to a perceived lack of political opportunity. Than Shwe did not apologize for his policy mistakes, let alone resign. The military also was

prepared to handle widespread demonstrations. It swiftly cracked down, arresting demonstrators and bystanders and killing more than thirty monks and laypeople. However, as in 1988, after the crackdown, the junta announced a date for elections (2010), to reduce radicalization and the sense of urgency for further demonstrations. This time, by imposing restrictions on independent political parties and rigging the voting, the junta was able to control the outcome.

The promilitary party won a landslide victory in the 2010 elections, but the generals released Aung San Suu Kyi after the elections. In March 2011 the generals established a new government led by ex-generals, and during its first year in the office, the military-backed government released many political prisoners, including the 1988 generation student leaders and monk leaders. The new government also allowed Aung San Suu Kyi's party to run in the by-elections in April 2012 in an apparent attempt to institute gradual political and economic reforms to avoid an Arab-style revolution.

The Emergence and Evolution of Student Activism

As this chronology suggests, three factors underlie the emergence and evolution of student activism in Burma: the existence of a vacuum of political opposition, the historical legacy of earlier student activism, and a strong sense of collective or corporate identity among students. Each of these factors is examined in the sections that follow.

Political Vacuum

Burma lacked an organized political opposition from 1900 to 1930, under colonial rule, and from 1962 to 1988, under military rule. Political parties did not exist before 1930 or (barring the ruling party) under military rule until late 1988. During these periods, actors other than students did not generally lead political opposition movements, leaving a vacuum for students to fill.

While farmers make up the majority of Burma's population, they live in small, scattered villages, with transportation and communication between them limited. Thus, it is difficult for them to take collective action that could coalesce into a national movement. Only in one instance, the 1930 peasant rebellion, did farmers' protest spread beyond a local area. Burma also has no large-scale industries where large numbers of workers

could network for collective action. Farmers and workers also have generally focused on limited issues of pay and commodity prices, making it difficult to attract other social actors to their cause. Thus the 1974–75 workers movement did not extend to many other actors, although some students joined in.

Although monks have institutions in which to gather and a number of them played prominent roles in the anticolonial movement, since independence, many senior monks have discouraged their juniors from engaging in political activities. Only in 2007, after former student leaders were quickly arrested and new students could not fill the vacuum due to heavy campus restrictions, did monks step in. Still, most of the monks who participated in the 2007 protests were students attending monastic education centers in the cities who ignored their superiors' warnings.

Civil society remains limited, and there has never been a large middle class in Burma (Taylor 2001, 7, 13). Although larger numbers of international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been permitted to operate there since the mid-1990s, government restrictions severely limit their scope. Furthermore, while armed opposition groups launched insurgencies in Burma's border regions at independence, these groups have gradually lost ground, leaving the center of the country with no significant political opposition until the NLD came to the fore after 1988.

Burmese students, then, have been in a position to fill the vacuum of political opposition during particular periods. Furthermore, many Burmese students believe they can represent the general public better than others because they see themselves as having less self-interest than those required to earn an income.[9] Most students in Burma receive money from their parents or other family members to pay for university fees. Moreover, students have more institutional space and free time than those engaged in securing livelihoods. Moreover, until 1996, the main universities in Rangoon drew students from different ethnicities and regions, providing a national-level gathering space where students could network, discuss politics, and organize campus protests or, in 1988, nationwide demonstrations.

Burmese students also have been willing to take the lead because they have had less to lose from a heavy-handed response than others have. Urban workers engaged in politics can lose their jobs, causing harm to themselves and dependent family members.[10] However, unlike in Indonesia, where authorities were relatively lenient toward student activists, in

Burma, student demonstrations were harshly repressed. In determining punishments, Burmese authorities did not give lesser sentences to students, but they generally punished all protest leaders more severely than their followers. Their goal was to root out and demoralize leaders who might otherwise continue underground activities and organize followers. Hence student leader Min Ko Naing, the first opposition leader arrested after 1988, was initially sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment.

Students have played leadership roles partly because their elite position has given them greater access than most to information and ideas. During the independence struggle, university students represented a miniscule proportion of the population, at a time when 85 percent of the population was composed of rural farmers with minimal access to formal education (Aung Tun 2007, 7). Even in 1986, university students made up only 0.3 percent of the population, and in 2006 they remained only 1 percent (Central Statistical Organization 2008, 14, 360, 362). This elite position has compelled some students to see it as their duty to represent other vulnerable sectors of society.

Students also are highly regarded by the general population. They often are considered innocent and ready to sacrifice for others since they are not interested in gaining political office. This is one reason that people have quickly lent their support to student movements. Many organizations of former students in Burma and in exile keep the word "students" in their organizations' names to maintain public support.

Many university students also feel a responsibility to break Burma's long cycle of repression and underdevelopment. One of the main reasons for university students' underlying frustration is the deteriorating quality of education. This has made it difficult for them to get jobs related to their studies or to be able to continue with further studies. Thus, they feel that if they do not make sacrifices to change the situation, not only will they suffer after graduation but also the next generation of students and the general public will too.

Historical Legacy

Generations of Burmese students have been inspired by their predecessors, who played a vanguard role in political opposition and became heroes in the independence struggle. Traditional songs, commemoration of famous places, and the school curriculum introduce Burmese students to historic heroes who started their political activities as university

student leaders. A famous independence song asks parents to give birth to heroes like Aung San. His birthday is celebrated as Children's Day. The main market, a prominent road, and the stadium in Rangoon are all named after Aung San. Aung San's story had been taught to Burmese students from primary school on, although more recently, under Than Shwe's rule, Aung San's role was minimized.

Burmese students also have been inspired by the fact that some former student leaders became senior government officials or famous writers, journalists, lawyers, and professors after independence. During the parliamentary democracy period, nationalist leaders, most of whom were former student leaders, took up leadership roles in politics. Not only the prime minister of Burma, U Nu, but also Deputy Prime Ministers Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein had been prominent student leaders. Famous writers, including Dagon Taya, Thein Pe Myint, and Daw Ah-Mar, were student activists during colonial rule. Many students in Burma have learned about politics and history from these authors' writings, which continue to inspire new generations of students.

Furthermore, the role of student unions during successive political eras has been passed on from generation to generation. Former student activists have encouraged the next generation of student activists to continue fighting for the rights that they could not achieve during their time. For example, student activists of the 1960s encouraged those of the 1970s to work for an end of military rule. Activists of the 1970s encouraged 1988 generation student activists to strive for the reestablishment of a legal student union and the restoration of democracy.[11] Former student leaders generally have recruited new activists by running literature discussion groups, setting up local libraries, and distributing poetry booklets among students. To meet other new recruits regularly, they also have used a range of venues, including university dormitories, tea shops, temples, and social gatherings such as weddings, birthdays, and funerals. They have encouraged new students to start by engaging in low-risk activities such as distributing underground leaflets and song tapes and organizing low-profile memorial events on anniversary days, especially on the anniversary of the demolition of the student union building. As a result, each new wave of demonstrations tends to be led by a combination of former student activists and newer recruits. Thus leading the 1996 student demonstrations were members of the 1988 younger generation, who had been released from prisons around 1992 and allowed to continue their studies, and the new student leaders they had cultivated.[12]

Strong Collective Student Identity

University students in Burma have a strong corporate identity and have usually responded quickly with collective action when fellow students have been hurt by authorities. Although some students organized small demonstrations after the demonetization of late 1987, they were unable to organize larger demonstrations until that sense of collective identity was attacked. In March 1988, some youths who beat up three Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) students in a tea shop brawl escaped punishment because they were related to local officials. Students from RIT protested the next day and demanded authorities take action against the local youths. However, the authorities responded by instead shooting at the student demonstrators, killing two students. This assault triggered a larger demonstration, with students from other universities in Rangoon joining to show their solidarity with their peers from RIT.

When thousands of university students marched along the road between Rangoon University and RIT, the authorities cracked down brutally, beating student demonstrators. Some students who fled toward the lake beside the road were forcibly drowned. About one thousand students were arrested and some died from suffocation in crowded prison vans (Lintner 1990, 9). That day many students witnessed the government's brutality for the first time. Even so, yet more students joined the demonstration at Rangoon University the next day, as the funeral of the first student killed at RIT took place. The authorities took the body away from his family and had it cremated secretly, increasing the students' anger.

When the university students returned to their hometowns after their universities were subsequently closed, they told their families and friends about the injustices done to fellow students. Although many of the students arrested in March were released within a few months, some learned that they had been expelled when the universities reopened in June 1988. This development triggered still more demonstrations calling for the annulment of the student expulsions. The authorities again cracked down on student demonstrators, outraging those who witnessed the violence. When universities were closed again, the students returned again to their hometowns and reported what had happened in Rangoon. These upsetting reports encouraged Burmese citizens broadly to join nationwide demonstrations in August 1988. Having learned from these events, authorities have been careful since 1988 not to hurt students in public, so as to avoid provoking further activism.[13]

Cooperation with Other Actors

The extent of students' cooperation with other actors in society depends on both whether the former's activism gains momentum and whether a political opportunity emerges because of regime weakness, which may be due either to a realignment of power or to the state's incapacity to crack down.

Student activists have faced a dilemma regarding whether to cooperate with other actors. On the one hand, students are worried that their demonstrations can be suppressed quickly if other actors, including political groups, join them. On the other hand, without broader participation, students will not be able to pressure the government to listen to them. The authorities have sometimes told students in private that it is fine if they work only for students' affairs by themselves and not for political affairs in alliance with others.[14] Also, since the authorities punished the families and friends of political activists, people were scared to associate with them. This trepidation limited the opportunities for students to develop close relations with others, including politicians.

Nevertheless, ever since student activism began during the independence struggle, students have worked to coordinate with other actors in society, including political organizations, to broaden and strengthen their movement. This historical legacy has influenced successive generations of student activists. Burmese student activists have typically focused initial protests on student rights in order to reduce the likelihood of a quick crackdown. Once these protests have gained momentum through the involvement of increasing numbers of students, participating students have then asked others in society to join. Others have indeed joined student-led demonstrations, but only when they have felt the moment was right, given political opportunity structures, to do so.

In June 1988, as demonstrations gained momentum, with thousands of students gathering on campus for two days, participants debated whether they should focus only on student affairs or broaden their call to political demands (Fink 2001, 52–53). One group of students said they should focus on student affairs, including compensation for students who were killed, the release of arrested students, the reinstatement of expelled students, and the formation of a student union. However, the other group of students said they should fight for all people, not just students. They said students should make broader demands such as replacing one party rule with a multiparty system, since the ruling Socialist Party was responsible

for the country's economic decline. In the end, the majority of students decided that they should get involved in national politics.

Following that decision, underground student unions that had been established that March and June took advantage of covert student networks reaching out to high school students and others in different parts of Burma. It was these unions that called the general strike on August 8, 1988. University students who had returned to their hometowns throughout Burma organized high school student activists and coordinated with other social groups in their areas. As a result, the demonstrations spread across the country. Others joined in, since they, too, were suffering from the deteriorating economy and were angry at the violence perpetrated against students. Furthermore, they had witnessed a political opportunity emerge when Ne Win resigned in July followed by a realignment within the regime, the withdrawal of troops, and the resignation of Ne Win's replacement after August 12, 1988.

Importantly, the students earned a nationally known ally when Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of independence hero Aung San, joined their cause. Other nationally known allies were former Prime Minister U Nu, former Brigadier General Aung Gyi, and former military commander-in-chief and ex-General Tin Oo. After five weeks of massive demonstrations, student leaders sought to support these individuals in setting up a transitional government. However, tensions quickly emerged to divide the political leaders.

One of the reasons that students could not coordinate well or effectively strategize for the whole movement was that despite their strong sense of collective identity as students, these activists also were divided. There were two main rival student unions: the ABFSU led by Min Ko Naing and another group that called itself the ABFSU Reorganizing Committee, led by Min Zeya. After the military retreated to its barracks, more than one hundred separate student unions emerged around the country, although all had the same objectives and had links to the Rangoon student unions. The divisions are perhaps not surprising since Burma had been under military rule for so long and civil society had been so repressed. Many activists found it difficult to work together in an organization or a coalition, as they had little previous experience in doing so.

The failure to set up a united coalition made it difficult for the movement to develop a well-coordinated plan to deal with the military. In fact, the students were emboldened by the mass movement and called for setting up a transitional government leading to regime change, an agenda to

which military authorities were likely to respond harshly. Demonstrators called for the creation of an interim government made up of prodemocracy leaders, rather than a unity government with military involvement. Divisions among politicians and students also made it easier for the military to rally its troops and eventually crack down on the demonstrators. The demonstrators were unable to sustain their momentum following the military crackdown due to poor coordination and the fact that their institutions were not yet well established.

During the 1996 demonstrations, students tried to cooperate with other actors after their initial student-only demonstrations. They tried to use issues of land confiscation, forced labor, and other human rights abuses to broaden their demands and reflect the interests of the general public. However, with no immediate economic shock at the time, it was difficult to induce others to participate. Also, there was no political opening since the regime leaders showed no sign of realignment or incapacity to crack down. In fact, the military cracked down very quickly.

The 2007 demonstrations, too, were limited to a small number of cities and towns. Once the demonstrators tried to include other actors—especially the main political opposition organization, the NLD—and to meet Aung San Suu Kyi, who was under house arrest, the military and proregime militias swiftly came out in force. This convinced many Burmese, especially civil servants and armed forces personnel, that political opportunity structures were unfavorable for them to join. Unlike in 1988, in 2007, nationally prominent figures such as Aung San Suu Kyi were unavailable as allies.

Although in 2007, as before, the 88 Generation Students' Group leaders tried to take the lead absent other organized political actors, they were rearrested immediately after initiating the demonstrations. After that, a famous actor and social activist, Kyaw Thu, and a well-known comedian, Zargana, both of whom were close associates of the 88 Generation Students' Group leaders, came out to the streets to donate food to the demonstrating monks. However, they, too, were quickly detained. Finally, the authorities succeeded in stopping the peaceful marches by using their usual methods of beating, arresting, and killing monks and others, and by organizing promilitary mass rallies opposing the monk-led demonstrations. Many of the 88 Generation Students' Group leaders and monks who had initiated and led the demonstrations were subsequently sentenced to up to sixty-five years' imprisonment each.

Notably in 2007, activists in Burma were linked through phone and Internet with activists in exile, many of whom were relatives and friends from the 8-8-88 movement. Money, communication devices, and recording equipment were sent inside Burma and used to transmit images of military brutality to the Burmese and international media. This resulted in more, and more timely, media coverage than in 1988. As a result, there was increased international awareness of the desire for change in Burma and a huge international outcry against the Burmese regime. Although the regime still felt compelled to use force to repress the demonstrations, the generals appeared to have exercised greater restraint than in 1988.

Regime Type: Repression and Its Effects

The type of regime in Burma has shaped the nature and scope of student activism in the country. During the democratic period, space existed for aboveground student activism. In contrast with the situation in South Korea, Burmese regimes have used both oppression to eradicate organized opposition and promises of change (through elections) after harsh crackdowns to reduce radicalization and the sense of urgency for further demonstrations. Importantly, state authority penetrates deeply into campus life, and hence it has a direct and pervasive influence on students.

In the democratic period, students enjoyed freedom of association and speech, and most student demands were resolved through dialogue between student union leaders and authorities. There was also academic freedom, and university education was managed by the civilian-led University Education Council, resulting in Rangoon University's being one of the best regional centers of higher learning.

However, after the 1962 coup, democratic rights were abrogated and nonstate associations eliminated. The new military-controlled state asserted its dominance through socialism and force (Taylor 2009, 12). In this way, coercion and threat of violence became rooted in state-society relations, with the military willing to use maximum force against civil dissent rather than negotiate (Callahan 2003, 211–12). The junta also quickly eliminated a key venue of student mobilization by blowing up the student union building. Moreover, successive regimes increased surveillance over students by expanding the military intelligence services and forcing professors to monitor and inform on students engaged in antigovernment activities. Academic freedom was curtailed, and senior military officers set education policy. Military propaganda—initially

claiming that only socialism could bring development and only the military could keep the ethnically diverse country together—became part of the curriculum. The quality of education declined.

Although it was difficult to organize collective action after losing official spaces within universities, student activism continued underground. Yet since student activism was illegal, it was difficult and risky for student activists to gather, plan, and organize. As a result, frustrations tended to prompt sporadic action rather than carefully planned and executed strategies. Examples include the spontaneous demonstrations at the Southeast Asian Peninsula Games in 1969, at U Thant's funeral in 1974, and as the response to demonetization in 1987. The underground nature of student activism also led student activists to organize low-risk activities at special occasions, such as secretly printing and distributing pamphlets commemorating the demolition of the student union building.

After 1988, some students set up political parties to have a legal space for students' political activities, but these were banned after 1990. Other students escaped to the jungle and established an armed student group to oppose military rule. However, they achieved no military headway, and many of those involved later resettled to other countries, where they continue to organize prodemocracy activities in exile.

After the events of 1988, the regime could no longer claim that socialism was a viable route to development. It was clear that the assertion of state control over society through socialism had led to "the near bankruptcy of the state and society" (Taylor 2009, 12). However, the military reasserted its dominance over society through pure force, eliminating opposition groups and remaking itself "as the ultimate force in the state" (Taylor 2009, 12). By imposing despotic rule over society, the regime made it difficult not only for political groups to oppose the military, but also for other economic and social forces to develop. Unlike other developmental regimes in Asia, the Burmese regime did not prioritize the development of other sectors, since it could generate most of its income from selling natural resources, especially gas. It sought to exploit the private sector, rather than see it as a partner for growth.[15] While the Burmese regime had development slogans, it lacked a clear development strategy.[16] This allowed it to treat civilian education and students as relatively unimportant, while focusing on the development of military universities after 1988.

After the 1988 coup, the military closed universities and imposed much stricter regulations on campus than had previously been in place.

Universities were closed for three years until 1991 to prevent further student demonstrations. Seven months after reopening, universities were closed again following another student demonstration when Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. When universities were reopened in 1992 and 1993, the academic year was reduced to only five months in order to reduce the time students would be together. From late 1993 until 1995, the universities were open for only four months per academic year; in late 1995, the junta extended the academic year slightly, to six months. However, when universities reopened in late 1996, students in Rangoon staged a demonstration for student rights. After that, the regime closed many universities for an unprecedented four years. In total, universities were open for only forty months during the twelve-year period from 1988 to 2000 (Foreign Affairs' Committee 2001, 37–38).

Surveillance of students also increased after 1988. Only registered students were allowed on university campuses and IDs were regularly checked. Teachers were trained and ordered to report on student activities. They also were warned that if demonstrations took place, they as teachers would be held responsible for not reporting the students' mobilization early enough to preempt them.[17] Military intelligence officers regularly visited university administrators to check on student activities and to hire informers among poor students.[18] Activists from the 1988 demonstrations who continued their studies were usually checked by intelligence officers regularly.[19] These surveillance activities made it difficult for students to organize underground activities. Some students thus gave up activism, while others continued with more caution.

After the 1996 demonstrations, the authorities opened the University of Distance Education, encouraging students to move to this program while other universities remained closed. Since students in this program rarely needed to come to campus, they could not easily get to know each other or organize gatherings. Science students only needed to go to campus on weekends, and only for five months a year, while arts students only needed to spend the ten days preceding their exams there. Not knowing when regular universities would reopen, the majority of students shifted to the distance education program (Foreign Affairs' Committee 2001, 41). Even after the universities reopened, between 2000 and 2006, on average, more than 70 percent of university students took distance education courses, leaving universities mostly quiet, with few day students (Central Statistical Organization 2008, 360–63).

After 1996, the regime also dispersed students to far-flung outlying areas by splitting existing universities and setting up new ones. This relocation "inhibited students' ability to launch major political activities" (Kyaw 2006, 166). Previously, all students studying for engineering degrees went to Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT), where the 1988 demonstrations started. The regime, therefore, set up a new Mandalay Institute of Technology (MIT), so students from Upper Burma would not need to go to study in Rangoon. RIT and MIT were each also split into three different programs at three different schools. Before, all engineering students from their first year to final (sixth) year had studied only at the Institute of Technology. Since 2000, first- and second-year engineering students study at government technical universities, while third- and fourth-year students take courses at technical colleges; only fifth-year and final year students study at technological universities (the new name for the institutes of technology). More than a dozen new universities also were established. Many of these were located outside Rangoon and other cities to reduce the number of students coming to urban campuses, which had been central places for student activism since the colonial period. This redistribution has reduced the concentration of students in downtown Rangoon and limited opportunities to network and plan anti-government activities. The long travel time to campuses outside the city also has reduced students' free time to meet and organize.

All of these measures have effectively limited university student activism in Burma since 1998. As a result, the students attending university in 2007 were not in a position to lead the demonstrations that year. However, there was some university student participation, and a group of students took up the ABFSU name and marched under the ABFSU flag.

Because of the regime's harsh repression of political activists, some students have turned to social work to try to have a beneficial impact on society. After Cyclone Nargis hit Burma in May 2008, killing more than 140,000 people and affecting more than two million others, social relief and rehabilitation efforts by community organizations, Buddhist monasteries, and churches mushroomed. Some student activists joined these organizations. Some students also have volunteered at monasteries and churches, which have become increasingly active in initiating educational and HIV awareness programs to fill gaps left by the government. Other student activists have tried to avoid overt political activities in order to keep their organizations alive.

Although members of the current generation of ABFSU student leaders were released in January 2012 and openly reestablished the student union, the government did nothing to stop them, in part because few new students have joined the union. Their activities were attracting far less popular interest than Aung San Suu Kyi's campaign trips for the April 2012 by-elections.

Severe long-term repression in Burma also has greatly limited the influence of regional and international student movements on Burmese student activism. Under Ne Win, Burma was particularly cut off from the world, but even today, Internet access is limited, expensive, and controlled, and any news about student activism in the region is censored. As a result, Burmese student activists inside the country have had no significant contact with student activists in other countries and have been barely influenced by other student movements.

Conclusion: A History of Resilience

Despite decades of severe military repression, Burmese students have repeatedly challenged military rule when opportunities have arisen to do so. Students played a vanguard role in the pivotal 1988 demonstrations and remain a major force for political, economic, and social change in the country. Their significance stems from students' key position amid a vacuum of political opposition, their deep awareness of Burma's legacy of student activism, and their strong sense of collective identity. From the colonial period onward, Burmese student activists have cooperated with other actors when possible to strengthen their movement. However, prevailing political opportunities at any given moment continue to influence how quickly and to what extent students can cooperate with others. Although the military-backed government may continue to restrict student activism, new generations of student activists will inevitably emerge to challenge military domination in Burma until genuine democratic reforms are instituted and the economy improves.

Notes

1. Statement of the boycott council, "The Voice of Young Burma: To the People of Burma," December 8, 1920.
2. *Nation*, *Guardian*, and Burmese Broadcasting Service, July 9, 1962.

3. Min Kyi (a former underground student member), in an interview with the author, January 2010.
4. Ibid.
5. *Guardian* and *The Working People's Daily*, July 24, 1988; Burmese Broadcasting Service, July 23, 1988.
6. Burmese Broadcasting Service, July 23, 1988.
7. Mandalay is the second largest city and has the highest number of monks in Burma.
8. This was extremely upsetting to military families, as regular contact with Buddhist monks is an important part of their lives.
9. Interview with Min Zin (a former student activist), in an interview with the author, July 2009.
10. Aung Myo Tint (a 1988 generation student leader), in an interview with the author, December 2008.
11. Moe Thee Zun (the second most prominent student leader in 1988), in an interview with the author, November 2008.
12. Thar Nyunt Oo (a student activist in 1988 and a 1996 student demonstration leader), in an interview with the author, July 2009.
13. Aung Lynn Htut (former military intelligence officer), in an interview with the author, July 2009.
14. Ibid.
15. Senior Burmese businessman, in an interview with the author, February 2009.
16. Economist who had been closely dealing with the Burmese government, in an interview with the author, December, 2009.
17. May Nyein (a former university lecturer), in an interview with the author, January 2009.
18. A former intelligence officer, in an interview with the author, August 2009.
19. Thar Nyunt Oo (who was arrested after 1988 and continued his studies after his release from prison), in an interview with the author, July 2009.

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8 MALAYSIA: MORE TRANSFORMED THAN TRANSFORMATIONAL

MEREDITH L. WEISS

The mention of student activism in Malaysia usually meets with one of three responses. The first is dismissal: the assertion, jocular or sad, that Malaysians just are not the protesting sort. The second is earnest, even wistful, invocation of the glory days of the late 1960s and early 1970s, when their strident outspokenness placed Malaysian students squarely within a world of student revolt. The final response, largely contained to graduates from the mid-1980s on, insists that local students are not so much averse to engagement as deterred from most forms of activism by coercive legislation. Each of these responses is correct in its way, however seemingly contradictory.

These reactions reflect the complex history of student activism in Malaysia. Once an obvious, important phenomenon, student activism largely vanished from the public eye, if never so starkly from the campus, after the mid-1970s. A rapidly consolidating, decreasingly liberal state has dealt harshly with students' subsequent moves toward reasserting themselves, even while masterminding the surging expansion of higher education in the interest of rapid economic development. Overlaying these changes in movement scale, regime response, and the education system have been shifts in the character and content of student activism. What most sets Malaysian student activism apart, seen in regional perspective, is its sustained decline and metamorphosis. As this chapter illustrates, three factors best account for these tendencies: Malaysian students' relative lack of independence from other social forces, their greater focus and impact on civil society than on institutional politics, and specific attributes of the nominally liberal, only moderately coercive Malaysian regime—although domestic factors alone cannot account for features of Malaysian student activism.

Overall, the case shows the capacity of a soft authoritarian, developmental regime to expand higher education while rechanneling most student activism to preclude challenges.

As elsewhere in the region, student activism in Malaysia has passed through several waves. (These phases are too interconnected and amorphous for easy characterization, but the notion of waves, with their connotation of flows and crests, captures the general sense.) First was an anticolonial, nation-building wave, strongest in the first decade after World War II, but lasting into the early 1960s. (What we now refer to as Malaysia then included Singapore as well.) Next was a left-wing wave focused more on issues of social justice and distribution, particularly strong from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s. Overlapping that phase, but extending well beyond it (and especially strong in the late 1970s and 1980s), has been a religious, especially Islamist, wave. And lastly, largely since the late 1990s, there has been a liberalizing wave focused on issues of democracy and civil liberties.

The Malaysian case raises tricky conceptual questions, particularly whether the mobilization endemic to Malaysian campuses since the early 1970s—especially *dakwah* (Islamist) activism—counts as a student movement, since it is not confined to students or targeted solely (or even primarily) at the state, and whether and how the class-oriented, regime-focused engagement of earlier years was so thoroughly vanquished. Moreover, even more than in many other postcolonial settings, these waves have developed in the context of rapid and radical changes in higher education. Local universities have grown in size, number, variety, and funding patterns; have undergone dramatic demographic shifts; and have aligned in shifting ways with an international higher education market. The dramatic reshaping of tertiary education—the nature and scope of universities themselves, education policies at all levels, economic restructuring, and more—has clearly had an impact upon students' self-understandings and position in the polity.[1] Only some Malaysian university students who *do* mobilize, this chapter argues, do so now as "students" rather than primarily as Muslims, youths, or merely Malaysians. Furthermore, after years of state-led discursive attacks on students' legitimacy as political actors, the Malaysian public has come to understand the collective identity of students differently today than previously or elsewhere.

This chapter will focus on how these threads—regime, education, and students—come together. The primary objectives include the following:

to situate student movements among other postwar social movements and forms of political engagement in Malaysia, to trace defining waves in Malaysian students' engagement, to explore what accounts for Malaysian students' lower political profile than that of counterparts even in far more repressive neighboring states, and, as much as possible, to tease out transnational links fostered by study abroad, shared literatures, or other cross-border connections.[2] The chapter begins with an overview of the changing political order and higher education system in Malaysia, as the rapidly transforming backdrop to student (de)mobilization. Next, it outlines the four core waves of student activism in Malaysia: nationalist, leftist, Islamist, and liberalizing. That survey will allow a discussion of how Malaysian student activism has changed over time, how it compares with that elsewhere in the region, and what current trends in higher education, economic development, and globalization might entail for students' identities and collective mobilization. Overall, though, the Malaysian story is one of activism more transformed by overarching sociopolitical change than itself fostering that change, even if student activism remains an important force.

Political and Educational Regimes in Postwar Malaysia

A cluster of former British colonies, Malaysia achieved sovereignty and its current borders in stages. Princely states on the peninsula, colonized largely in the late nineteenth century, united in an autonomous Federation of Malaya in 1957. In 1963, Singapore as well as two states on nearby Borneo island, Sabah and Sarawak, joined the peninsula; the new polity was named Malaysia. Unable to resolve tensions over power sharing and national identity, Singapore exited two years later, in 1965. While nationalist organizations did form, mostly in the interwar and postwar periods, Malaysia won its independence largely without bloodshed: the British trained local administrators, organized initial elections as they phased in self-government, and then left—albeit retaining a hefty financial foothold and favoring a Western-educated, capitalist-inclined elite to hold political office, in a Westminster-style parliamentary system. Members of that elite in Malaysia formed the Alliance, a tripartite, consociational coalition comprised of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).

This order persisted more or less intact through 1969. At that point, when opposition parties threatened to upset the incumbent coalition's dominance, parliamentary government was suspended for twenty-one months while the Alliance reconsolidated as the expanded, encompassing Barisan Nasional (BN, National Front). The new order put ethnic Malays more definitively at the forefront (albeit still governing in coalition with Chinese and Indian Malaysians); whittled away the space available for opposition, both by curbing civil liberties and by absorbing so many opposition parties; and grew increasingly centralized and authoritarian over time. Elections continued—and the regime sustained a high degree of performance legitimacy as economic development sped along—but dissent grew ever more difficult and sparse. A combination of economic downturns and more personal leadership factors opened the field to greater contestation starting in the late 1990s. However, not only was the state quick with brickbats in response, but the arena by that point was also, as much in civil society as formal politics, deeply racialized (or "communal," for the term generally used in Malaysia) and skewed to the advantage of Malays and Islam (the religion of all Malaysian Malays), and pockmarked by laws curbing rights of speech and association.

Though one among many constituencies rocked by these shifting political tides, university students remained central to the state's plans. Initially in the 1940s–50s, leaders articulated a political vision for a newly educated elite. Later, students remained key less for their intellectual contributions than for the pivotal place of higher education in the regime's ambitious development plans and policies. Tertiary education has expanded exponentially in Malaysia since the 1940s, with spectacular growth even just since the mid-1990s. British colonial authorities launched Malaysia's first university, the University of Malaya, in Singapore in 1948. At independence in 1957, the Federation of Malaya still had but one university: Universiti Malaya, the then brand new peninsular campus of what had become the University of Malaya in Singapore (renamed the University of Singapore after separation). By the early 1970s, Malaysia had five universities, all public, supplemented by a trickle of new additions up until the mid-1990s. At that point, the dams broke. A series of enactments introduced private universities and otherwise restructured the higher education system.[3] A decade later, Malaysia had dozens of universities, both public and private. In 1991, 9 percent of Malaysians had postsecondary education; ten years later, the proportion was 16 percent (Government of Malaysia 2002). The official, and not implausible,

target is 40 percent by 2020, a number remarkable for the speed with which it has been achieved, even if that proportion is not unusual by contemporary global standards.

This progression is a core part of Malaysia's developmentalist economic plans, including aspirations toward a "knowledge economy," rapid and sustained growth, and moving ever further up the economic food chain. University expansion has been central, too, to affirmative action policies and specifically efforts, stepped up dramatically after the turbulent late 1960s, to educate and advance the historically disadvantaged Malay majority. Malays composed fewer than 10 percent of university students through the 1950s, around 25 percent by the mid-1960s, then topped 70 percent within a decade, after a shift to Malay-medium instruction and the revamping of preferential policies.[4] Yet quality has not kept pace with quantity: today's universities enjoy far less respect and far lower international rankings than in the past.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian polity has stayed a course of reasonably steady semidemocracy.[5] Citizens sometimes do take to the streets, but unlike in much of East and Southeast Asia, students have not been at the forefront, if they participate at all. At the same time, the character of Malaysian politics and society has changed perceptibly over the past twenty-five years: Islam now is an unassailable feature of political life. (Campus *dakwah* movements have played no small role in furthering that shift.) Questions of whether Malaysian students' oft-cited apathetic reputations are actually deserved or run deeper than elsewhere, what the massification and qualitative decline of higher education means for students' political potential, how universities figure in the country's political landscape, and the relative stature of intellectuals temper any sensible and nuanced understanding of Malaysian sociopolitical dynamics.

Student Activism in Malaysia: A Tetralogy of Movements

A rough cut across student activism in Malaysia would identify four key, but not entirely chronologically ordered or temporally defined, waves of engagement or loosely structured movements. Early on, students were part of a vanguard, together with an emerging first generation of also English-educated, idealistic politicians; over time students came to define themselves more as working with the people rather than at the helm. Suppression of the political Left helped to foreground a religious revival on campus, and now, students play only supporting roles in efforts for

political change. This repositioning has aligned at least loosely with shifts in focus, in a sweep spanning political, economic, and moral questions, over the course of six decades.

The Nationalist Wave: Ending Colonialism and Building a Nation

The first wave of student protest in colonial Malaya began before World War II, around the 1930s, sparked by debates across society over communism, Malay radicalism, and issues of national and ethnic identity. In both peninsular Malaya and Singapore, Chinese-educated high school students were far more active than (English-educated) college students, whose campuses were then in Singapore. The core issues of many activists among the former fit a Kuomintang-led agenda of promoting Chinese nationalism, language, and culture, and opposing Japanese aggression against China (Spector 1956, 71–72). Other students also were active at the time, albeit less notoriously and extensively so. For instance, Malay students from the peninsular Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) launched the anticolonial, Malay-nationalist Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, Young Malay Union) in the early 1930s, while at least a handful of the Malayans then attending Raffles College and the King Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore joined the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU)—which agitated against colonialism, British constitutional arrangements, and the separation of Singapore from peninsular Malaya while lobbying for a full-fledged local university (Puthucheary 1998, 4–5)—and/or the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). At the time, both Chinese- and English-educated activists conceptualized a special role and identity for students as future leaders and avatars of societal uplift and improvement. A common thread running through these critiques was the challenge to British colonialism and support for a sovereign Malayan nation.

The early postwar years and independence in 1957 brought a second dimension to this wave of student activism, focused both inward on the campus and outwardly. Even as formal colonialism ended, Malaya lacked a coherent national culture. Students argued stridently for particular visions of the nation and paths toward nation building, foregrounding issues of language and education. Nationalist students in the new University of Malaya (UM, based in Singapore until the late 1950s) wrote and spoke with a cadence of entitlement to be heard: for instance, they proposed a Malayan Students' Party in 1949 to further Malayan consciousness, culture, and nationalism on and off campus;

campus publications became platforms for strategies for national development, growth, and integration, not least debates and initiatives on language, seen as central to nation building; and students allied with nationalist journalists and trade unionists against continued British rule and influence (Puthucheary 1998, 7; Hassan 1984, 1; A. Samad 1998). The colonial government detained one group of such students and recent graduates in January 1951, charging them with being part of the left-wing Anti-British League (ABL) and MDU, as part of the so-called University Case (Fernandez 2000; Puthucheary 1998, 4–10). The Colonial Office in London described the activists involved not only as active communists, but also as "directly responsible for propaganda which was not only 'anti-imperialistic' in tone but definitely subversive and inciting to violence."[6] In fact, the students involved were more nationalist than communist, and they took real risks to advance the anticolonial struggle (Yeo 1994, 35–49; 1992, 355–56).

Upon his release after a year, University Case detainee and student James Puthucheary convinced the UM administration to allow students to set up political clubs to distract them from such more worrisome alternatives, without fully stifling their political impulses. He helped form the University Socialist Club (USC) and the Pan-Malayan Students Federation in 1953. The USC's journal, *Fajar*, soon became an important nationalist and left-wing forum—especially after eight editorial board members were arrested, tried, and acquitted for sedition in connection with a 1954 article on Western powers' involvement in Southeast Asia. Published shortly after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the article condemned the formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and faulted continued colonialism for stunting political development in Malaya and the region.[7] Meanwhile, Chinese secondary school students in Singapore and across the peninsula continued their (sometimes bloody) protests, most famously over a controversial national service policy in 1954 and in connection with a transport workers' strike in 1955. (Students from Chinese-medium Nanyang University, established in 1959, soon joined the fray.) Future Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew earned his stripes defending both the *Fajar* board and students opposed to a new national service requirement in court (Spector 1956, 66; Puthucheary 1998; Tan 1997).

Indeed, throughout the period, students made headlines in their own right, but they also connected with likeminded journalists, leftist politicians, and other intellectual leaders of the day. While these students were less a vanguard in the sense of acting alone or taking the lead than

elsewhere, both student and mainstream media and politicians lauded students' necessary contributions to core struggles of the era, especially the daunting process of nation building. That process was complicated all the more by the incorporation of Singapore into an expanded Malaysia in 1963 and then by its expulsion two years later; leftist student groups lambasted not so much the project of Malayan unity as the undemocratic means by which it was pursued and the neoimperialist roots of the initiative (Silverstein 1970, 15–16; *Fajar*, December 1961, March–April 1962, July 1962, 1–4). Even so, some of the most significant and enduring student organizations of the era were hardly radical—most notably unions of all UM students, all peninsular Malayan students, and all Malaysian students, respectively.[8] And overall, while the general sentiment among students favored independence and nation building, students' politicization was limited, even at the height of nationalist ferment. Impediments to more strident mobilization included the lack of the spur of a war for liberation, as in Indonesia; the linguistic barrier between Anglophone university students and the mass public; and the extent to which the interests of local elites (including most university students and graduates) aligned with those of the soon-departing British.

The Leftist Phase: Mobilizing for Social Justice and Redistribution

Malaysian student activism entered a new phase in the late 1960s through the early 1970s. Student activists then joined forces with peasants and workers in presenting a socialist-inflected challenge to state-led development policies, as well as protesting (to an extent unusual for the region) around international concerns such as the Vietnam War and Middle East conflict and on issues of language, culture, and the status of Islam in the polity. Some of these protests were clearly in line with international trends, others centered on local politics, and still others were focused inward on the campus itself. The guiding ethos behind this involvement, however, accorded with that of a global student Left defined substantially, but not entirely, in economic and anti-imperialist terms, and colored increasingly (at least among the growing cohort of Malay-Muslim students) by a specifically Islamic appeal to social justice. Prominent student organizations of the period ran the gamut from the multiracial UM Student Union (UMSU) and Socialist Club; to Malay, Chinese, and (less politicized) Tamil language societies; to the overwhelmingly Malay UM Muslim Students' Society (Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam, PMI).

The public and political leaders initially lauded students' even overtly political engagement—most obviously, a *manifesto pelajar* (students' manifesto) and a series of well-attended rallies UMSU organized for the 1969 elections (Hassan 1984, 4–5; Hishamuddin 2002; Muhammad 1973, 80–82). The manifesto's seven points focused primarily on issues pertaining to civil liberties, national sovereignty, and equitable development (Lee and Hermani 1972, 56–59). As then-student Cheah Boon Kheng gushed in his regular *Sunday Times* column of his peers' favorable reception, "It was roses, roses all the way. Not a word was raised against the students—either from the Government or the Opposition parties."[9] And students put these principles into practice themselves through various forms of community service and outreach. While not new, these programs expanded dramatically in the 1960s and early 1970s, especially among Malay students engaging with rural Malay areas (Kee 1976, 41–43; Gopikumar 1972). Complementing these efforts was the new Speaker's Corner launched at UM in 1967, from which students hatched numerous on- and off-campus protests.

As students' political mobilization ramped up, so did the government's efforts to keep activism in check. The Schools (Post-Secondary) Societies Regulations of 1960—passed despite students' objections—required information of all student organizations and authorized school authorities to dissolve any society used for "political propaganda" (Silverstein 1970, 15). Then in 1964, worried about radical influences from Singapore, the Malaysian government mandated (as Singapore already had) that university and college applicants obtain a "suitability certificate" from the chief educational officer (*Malayan Undergrad* 1962, 5; *Rocket* 1967, 8). This loyalty check inspired UMSU and the Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-Pelajar Malaysia (National Union of Malaysian Students, PKPM) to hold an Autonomy Day in 1967 (itself spurring a "declaration of independence" from dissenting students connected with the Malay Language Society, or Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya, PBMUM); the government soon provisionally suspended the requirement in response (Silverstein 1970, 16–18).

The split over the Autonomy Day issue presaged a deep rift developing among students, particularly as UM underwent a dramatic demographic shift: due in large part to state-led preferential policies, the proportion of Malay students—many from rural, less privileged backgrounds—increased starting around 1967. Many of those students considered the student union, however multiracial in premise,

to represent the interests of the non-Malays so long in the majority at UM; coming often from different economic and educational backgrounds, Malay students increasingly found a more comfortable home in the Malay-focused PBMUM or PMI. Especially from the late 1960s on (when charismatic politician-to-be Anwar Ibrahim helmed both organizations), PBMUM and PMI stressed issues of Malay language, culture, and rights, aggressively pressing both campus and government officials to revamp language and education policies and insisting that accommodationist Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman step down. Even so, the quintessential (and firmly suppressed) student protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s were ones that revolved around Malay rights, but attracted broad student (and even lecturers') support, for instance over the land claims of poor Malays in Selangor and Johor (the Teluk Gong struggle of 1967 and Tasik Utara of 1974) or of Malay rubber smallholders in Kedah in 1973 (Hassan and Siti Nor 1984). These struggles fit within a communal framework to some extent, but aligned at least as well with critiques of economic priorities and inequities.

These pro-poor protests coincided with wider political unrest (especially racial clashes in May 1969) and spanned UM as well as the new National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM) and Science University (Universiti Sains Malaysia, USM), both opened in 1970, and then also the University of Technology and Agriculture University (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, UTM, and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, UPM, respectively), launched soon after. (UM still remained the most active campus, not least for its larger size and more established history. Later, the picture grew more complex, depending more on specific administrators, rules, locations, and other institutional characteristics.) The wave of agitation spurred more far-reaching legislation. The findings of the Campus Investigative Committee of the authoritarian National Operations Council government of 1969–71 became the basis of the University and University Colleges Act (UUCA). Passed by parliament in March 1971, the law survived demonstrations against it over the next several years and then was firmly reinforced in 1975 in response to alleged communist schemes. Although its provisions initially related mostly to the establishment of new universities, the UUCA also tightened restrictions on students' associations—especially their political activities. Student activists initially largely ignored the UUCA, but its curbs grew more insistent after 1975, especially as each university also promulgated its own new disciplinary rules for students, then faculty and staff, by the

late 1970s. Also in 1971, the government amended the constitution to remove sensitive issues from public debate and embarked on a program of economic restructuring, the New Economic Policy (NEP), to combat poverty and reduce the identification of race with occupation. A core component of the NEP was a system of quotas to increase Malays' access to higher education, significantly speeding the demographic transformation that had already begun on campus.

The Religious Wave: The Rise of Islam

With more universities,[10] a differently constituted student body, and a stricter legal regime, student activism entered a more muted phase in the mid-1970s. Education was increasingly practical rather than academic in focus, as a 1984 plan made clear (Rustam 1989, 17) and subsequent five-year national development plans reiterated (Sharom 1980, 727; Thong 1997, 154–55). Overall, students' methods in this period were far less strident than pre-UUCA (see Junaidi 1993, 106, 113–17). Both the student Left and the once-powerful student unions had been decimated, along with both student and faculty publications.[11] International inspirations were likewise on the wane, as a global student protest cycled into remission. Substantially filling the resultant vacuum on campus were Muslim (*dakwah*) and, to a lesser extent, Catholic and other religious organizations. (Notably, however apparent the parallels from a social activist perspective, and even despite electoral pacts for campus elections, Catholic and Islamist student activists generally interacted little.[12])

Contemporary *dakwah* activism began with the Pertubuhan Al Rahmaniah at UM in 1965 (Mohd. Daud 1979, appendix A) and came to span a range of large and small organizations of varying sociopolitical stripes as the 1967 Arab–Israeli War, Iranian Revolution, Afghan resistance, struggles of Indonesian and Thai Muslims, oil shocks, and more stimulated Muslim identity and organization.[13] These groups maintained the loosely leftist social justice focus of the 1960s–70s at least initially, linking religious belief with social issues such as poverty and corruption, but they came to focus increasingly on less socially engaged, personal devotional understanding and ritual, especially from the mid-1980s on. Early on, national leaders encouraged *dakwah* activism as a means to overcome problems of communism, moral decay, indiscipline, and drugs, especially on campus (Mohd. Daud 1979, 9). These authorities looked less kindly upon a second wave of the movement that began later in the

1970s, influenced by more radical movements such as Egypt's Ikhwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) and Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami, which hundreds of Malaysian students encountered in the course of studies overseas (Zainah 1987, 24–25). By the mid-1980s, Zainah Anwar found around two-thirds of Malay university students "committed at some level or other to *dakwah*" (1987, 33–34)—although it appeared to be a far smaller core of a couple hundred students that participated actively in seminars, debates, forums, and the like (Ahmad Lutfi 1987, 37). The movement then saw something of a decline in the late 1980s, as the economy picked up and the political order stabilized.[14]

By the 1970s, the main factions among students were a progovernment one and a comparatively antiestablishment Islamist one. Both camps focused primarily (and at times quite contentiously) on campus issues. The progovernment camp lost support in the late 1970s and early 1980s, especially as Islamic revivalism gained steam (Jomo, Hassan, and Ahmad Shabery 1989, 154). The goals of the *dakwah* movement overall were (and are) Islamization of society, both through stricter praxis among Muslims and conversion of non-Muslims, and, more controversially, Islamization of the state. The *dakwah* movement's methods have ranged from unobtrusive study groups to moderately violent protests against pop singers and other perceived travesties. Clive Kessler explains, Islam offered "an important parapolitical outlet, one that the government is reluctant to choke off too clumsily or abruptly and which therefore enjoys a certain immunity" (1980, 9), even though "what is on the one hand a genuinely religious movement also constitutes, on the other, a critique of the bureaucratic state, its economic policies, and its deracinating cultural effects" (1980, 3). Meanwhile, albeit on a smaller scale, the combination of similar malaise in the face of Western values and the challenge of *dakwah* prompted both religious revival and common cause among the Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, and Hindu communities, particularly among urban, English-educated, middle-class youth, including on campus (Nagata 1980, 436–37).

However, the *dakwah* movement has been divided between those with an Arabic/religious versus secular education and those focused on more spiritual issues or on social issues. The relative sway of each group has varied over time: the movement came to rely less on the teachings of the Arabic/religious-educated group by the late 1970s, for instance. Moreover, the movement has never been confined to students, however central their contributions—indeed, the off-campus Malaysian Islamic

Youth Movement (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, ABIM), formed by and for graduates of the campus-based National Movement of Islamic Students (Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia, PKPIM), has been a central force since its launch in 1971 (Mohamad 1981, 1045; Zainah 1990; Jomo, Hassan, and Ahmad Shabery 1989). Similarly, the major crackdown of the period—1987's Operasi Lalang and cognate Operation Spectrum in Singapore, which especially targeted Catholics inclined toward liberation theology—did not focus on students, although its effects reverberated on campus (see Barr 2008 for details). Notwithstanding such backlash against its more critical dimensions, *dakwah* activism has resonated deeply and enduringly both within and beyond the campus. State and national-level institutional shifts, especially linked with a policy launched in the early 1980s of *penyerapan nilai-nilai Islam*, or assimilation of Islamic values in public institutions, both followed and furthered these trends.

The Liberalizing Wave: Mobilizing for Democracy and Civil Liberties

Student activism entered a fourth phase in the late 1990s. While some of the issues then motivating students were specific to universities—the little-loved UUCA, or ethnic and religious dynamics on campus—others reflected national politics. The most visible, and most vigorously suppressed, of these campaigns centered on the pursuit and extension of civil liberties and democratic governance, both on campus and nationally. However pioneering students' role in the early postwar period was, by now, established political interests and civil society organizations were able to take the lead. Among students, the groups active at this stage included multiracial ones focused on democracy and social justice issues (for instance, the Malaysia Youth and Students Democratic Movement [Gerakan Demokratik Belia dan Pelajar Malaysia, DEMA] and National Undergraduates Action Front [Badan Bertindak Mahasiswa Negara, BBMN]), diverse and sometimes opposing Muslim organizations and networks, and proestablishment blocs. A subset of students were involved with opposition political parties (especially the Malaysian Islamic Party [Parti Islam seMalaysia, PAS] or National/People's Justice Party [Parti Keadilan Nasional/Rakyat, PKN/PKR]), although forbidden by the UUCA; the state both publicly derided and harshly penalized such ties. University staff members similarly were warned to eschew politics. Yet other students' engagement with progovernment

groups or component parties of the ruling coalition attracted less opprobrium—and a subset of students did take rather reactionary positions on issues important to the state. UM student council president Mohamad Efendi Omar asserted the UUCA was still relevant in 2006, for instance, deriding his less docile classmates by saying, "We are just students for three or four years. Why do you want to get involved in politics outside campus?"[15]

The prodemocracy Reformasi movement of 1998–99 was especially galvanizing, although students joined more as supporting players than as leaders. Even so, sporadic student protests and attendant crackdowns continued even after most Reformasi activity had tapered off. The loosely contained movement drew in the gamut of students, from pro-Malay Islamists to Chinese-educated leftists. While the foci and participants of specific campaigns varied, the general timbre of students' engagement sustained its emphasis on dimensions of political liberalization. Strategies varied, from anonymous underground publications to contest censorship, to petitions, to candlelight vigils, to court challenges against punishments for alleged violations.

University and government authorities' tolerance for student protest was low: Malay scholarship students were castigated for wasting the public's money, protests met with threats and arrests (including under the Internal Security Act, ISA), and student leaders endured months or years of protracted disciplinary hearings and legal proceedings. By this point, over two decades' experience of depoliticization since the early 1970s, and especially the UUCA, had taken their toll. Undergraduates of the 1990s and 2000s were more apt than their predecessors to eschew politics as both dirty and beyond the proper ambit of students like themselves (Unit Pendidikan Politik–Institut Kajian Dasar, UPP-IKD 2003) and to accept the UUCA as necessary to maintaining a peaceful, harmonious campus environment (Junaidi 1993, 108–11). Meanwhile, factional rivalries caused a rift among students, playing out most obviously at the level of campus elections, which came increasingly to resemble those off-campus: progovernment National Front–like coalitions battled anti-establishment coalitions akin to the opposition Alternative Front or People's Alliance, their fortunes rising and falling in turn amidst swirls of malfeasance and accusations thereof.

At the same time, the absolute number of students had soared. By 2007, Malaysia had twenty public universities, thirty-four community colleges, and twenty-one polytechnics, alongside 532 private institutions

of higher learning (thirty-two of them degree-granting universities or university colleges).[16] The number of yearly graduates swelled by 50 percent in public institutions alone, just between 2000 and 2005—a staggering increase for so brief a span of time.[17] Clearly, the average student could no longer claim to be part of a privileged, entitled elite nor could she look forward to an assured, secure career after graduation. The sheer fact of competition, as well as debt from the cost especially of private education, offered powerful demobilizing impetuses to activism, especially as state and campus authorities missed no chance to remind students of employers' reluctance to hire troublemakers.[18]

Malaysian Students in Comparative Perspective

Given this confluence of serious disincentives for engagement, internalization of depoliticizing messages, and the sheer number of students enrolled, the proportion of today's students who would likely identify as activists is paltry. Not just students, however, tend toward political inactivity in Malaysia: the population as a whole is known for relative apathy or, at least, disengagement. Still, Malaysian students used to be ringleaders—and elsewhere in the region, as the other chapters here describe, students still are. It is thus appropriate to consider how and why Malaysian students differ from their counterparts elsewhere. Three angles offer particular insight.

First, Malaysian students are less independent of other social forces than, for instance, their counterparts in China are. Undergraduates in Malaysia would be hard-pressed to claim responsibility for positive (or negative) sociopolitical changes, since they have seldom battled alone; even when they claimed especial significance as rising, meritorious new elites in the run-up to independence, local students were at pains to assert their connectedness with the people and allied enthusiastically with journalists, the nascent People's Action Party (PAP), and other friendly forces. For example, UMSU President-Elect Fred Samuel goaded his classmates in 1956, "Are we to sit complacently and not take up this glorious challenge to contribute our part to the building of our Malayan nation, in return for our privileged position?"[19] Political leaders were fully supportive at the time. Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, for one, asserted at the launch of UM's 1960 Welfare Week, "No university worth its salt can live in a vacuum of pure academic knowledge; it must have some relation to the community; there must be an identity between the

university and the nation."[20] Since then, while policymakers have grown generally less enamored of their activism, Malaysian students still have joined the chorus in calling for everything from minor policy reorientation to regime change, but with a collaborative spirit. However potentially useful these broad-based coalitions may be, any particular contributor loses the historical validation of having taken the lead—the sort of legacy that motivates and justifies repeated episodes of Indonesian student mobilization, for instance.

Second, student activists' major gains have carried greater impact within the university and civil society than in the realm of formal politics, unlike in states such as Indonesia or South Korea, where students have helped to advance significant institutional reform. Exemplary instances of this tendency in Malaysia include the rapidly implemented change in language of instruction after 1967, pursued stridently by the growing, well-organized ranks of Malay students, and the dramatic rise in Islamic organizations and social norms, advanced in large part by active campus *dakwah* organizations. The former sort of changes may be politically relevant, but they are felt most keenly by students and university staff, not the general public or politicians. And the latter set of changes tends to rely less on students' status as students than on their mobilization along ethno-religious lines. The contributions of those who remain engaged beyond graduation may be qualitatively about the same as those of students.

Lastly, specifics of regime type go far to mold students' and other citizens' engagement. For instance, unlike in those states (i.e., contemporary South Korea, the Philippines, Japan) more deeply committed at least in principle to liberal democracy, the Malaysian regime relies substantially on criteria of economic performance or, increasingly, Islamic observance, rather than popular sovereignty in claiming political legitimacy. Attempts to hold the regime to a specific democratic standard, then, may flounder. Moreover, Malaysian nation building has proceeded absent the sort of nationalist myth that comes of unifying for battle as in Indonesia and Burma; the British fostered a moderate, capitalist, racially structured coalition to take their place in governing an independent Malaysia. Far from amiably noncommunal as they were at an earlier (and more homogenous) phase, Malaysian students today are at least as ethnically striated as the rest of the population. Moreover, the suppression of the Left on and off campus has left little space for ideological challenges in economic (as opposed to religious) terms.

Importantly, Malaysian students have never been isolated; any comparison must take into account the external influences on local developments. Four dimensions in particular capture students' implicit or explicit transnationalism. First, Malaysian student unions have been party to international student unions or networks, from the International Student Conference to the Asian Students' Association (launched in Kuala Lumpur in 1969), from at least the 1950s on. Second, Malaysians have studied abroad in significant numbers since the colonial period. Initially, those studies were largely in the United Kingdom or its dominions, or at prominent Islamic institutions. Later, student flows have tended toward Taiwan (among ethnic Chinese), the United States, Canada, and Australia, among a host of less-common destinations. While there, many students have formed or joined Malaysian and Singaporean student groups, some of them closely involved with developments back home. And students have pursued short-term study tours or exchanges from the outset of tertiary education in what is now Malaysia. Compounding these effects are Malaysia's efforts especially since the mid-1990s to attract foreign students itself; the concentration locally of Iranian students, for example, enabled those students to launch protests in Malaysia—which the police broke up with tear gas—at the time of the 2009 Iranian elections.[21]

Third, Muslim and Catholic students have had important, often very active links with peers, especially across Asia. The significance of study abroad—especially in Britain, but also in Egypt, India, and Saudi Arabia—as a spur for consciousness raising among Muslims is well known, but this pattern offers insufficient analytical leverage to explain the synchronicity and similarity of trends, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. Those parallels may or may not be coincidental. Concrete linkages can be found, ranging from friendship networks to common texts, yet the organizations active in Malaysia are for the most part not the same as those in Indonesia or elsewhere. Local Catholic students likewise have at least some connections with counterparts in the Philippines, Hong Kong, India, and elsewhere—although, again, the real salience of those networks is unclear in terms of the extent to which international influences have actively shaped local agendas or strategies beyond simply offering, for instance, expanded immersion and networking opportunities.

And lastly, international events have consistently sparked student mobilization in Malaysia. The Vietnam War was about as galvanizing among students in Malaysia as anywhere, for instance, while the Palestinian cause has long been of core interest, and not just among

Muslim students. Students have protested the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968,[22] the Philippines for its territorial claims to Sabah,[23] Indonesia's occupation of East Timor,[24] oppression of Muslims in Thailand's southern provinces,[25] and more. Most recently, students have mobilized on several occasions against American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.[26]

These campaigns reveal at least some sense among Malaysian students of an identity as global citizens. However, the international student news page and auxiliary articles that used to feature prominently in UMSU's newspaper, as well as other coverage of global student protest, ended with the banning of those earlier publications. More to the point, student mobilization today lacks the global framework offered by transnational student networks of the past; contemporary variations are neither so structured nor so student-specific as the core cold war student blocs were previously.

Conclusion: The Transformation Continues

Three factors remain most central in (re)molding student activism in Malaysia. First are changes in education policies, including to promote internationalization and technological specialization amid exigencies of declining university rankings, economic globalization, and endemic graduate unemployment (e.g., Sato 2005, 85–86).[27] In early 2005, the government tasked a committee headed by the former director-general of education, Tan Sri Dr. Wan Zahid Noordin, with surveying current growth and development in the higher education sector and identifying problems and issues, based on public feedback and comparison with world-class institutions overseas.[28] The committee's report covered a vast range of concerns, with a notable emphasis on expanding, increasingly privatizing, and generally improving the quality of tertiary and postgraduate education.[29] The resultant National Higher Education Strategic Plan and 2007–10 Action Plan were rather modest, adopting the committee's recommendations in such areas as selection of senior administrators, quality audits, links with industry, lifelong learning, and nurturing of favored apex universities, but doing little in more fraught areas such as academic autonomy, creative thinking, or appropriate criteria and procedures for appointments and promotions.[30] Importantly, the strictures curtailing student mobilization remain intact: despite the committee's stress on such imperatives as space and support for critical

thinking, these latest policy changes reinforce the notion of higher education for human resource development and national prestige—but with that prestige defined not in terms of humanistic theorists, creative artists, or astute leaders as implied in the rhetoric of a past age, but of technological skill.

Second are recurrent, but so far ephemeral, political openings—for instance, after the opposition's unusually strong performance in the 2008 elections. The government offers periodically that it will review the UUCA, the ISA, and other policies against which students mobilize. Should a more liberal regime come to power, it could choose to revise or lift the legal strictures curbing students and other activists in civil society, including a range of controls on free expression and association. By this point, as noted previously, students may choose not to engage for entirely different reasons, particularly a lack of sense of their own special agency, given how common their status has become, and financial obligations that advise against any endangerment of future career prospects, but also merely due to the generic proliferation of demands on their leisure time. All the same, the UUCA and other laws *do* undoubtedly play a role in stifling dissent as well; their relaxation would allow students again to experiment with dissent as in the past.

And last is the increasing professionalization and diversification of civil society, including a notable resurgence of organizations and parties of the Left. Not only do student organizations in contemporary Malaysia seek allies in civil society, but also politically inclined students see career paths in nongovernmental organizations—from off-campus *dakwah* groups to human rights advocacy organizations—and alternative online, electronic, and print media. These outlets assuage would-be activists' fears of unemployment should they choose to engage and get caught but, at the same time, further whittle away any sense of student exceptionalism: student activism is ever more akin in Malaysia to any other activism. The end result is that there is a more engaged subset of Malaysian students today—encouraged by the possibility of a political opening, spurred by awareness of their universities' decline, exposed to models of and texts on student activism elsewhere via the Internet, and less fearful of being jobless and bereft upon graduation—but without the sense of collective identity as "students" that drove their counterparts locally in decades past and still drives students elsewhere in the region today.

Notes

1. Paired with those issues is the legacy of ethnic Chinese secondary school student activism, particularly with an aggressively leftist and sometimes violent bent, through the 1950s in both peninsular Malaya and Singapore. For reasons explained in the introductory chapter, however, this chapter only focuses on university-based tertiary education.
2. This chapter develops a more general history of Malaysian student activism, framed in terms of the role of students in the polity, the significance of the campus as a political institution, and the declining status of intellectualism in Malaysian political life (further discussed in Weiss 2005; 2011).
3. Similar policies and expansions took effect elsewhere—for instance, in Thailand—contemporaneously. Yet, despite the availability of regional networks of higher education officials and policymakers, regional or global examples seem not to have played a prominent role in developing local Malaysian policies, at least gauging from public discussion of the proposals.
4. Burma similarly converted the language of university instruction locally from English to Burmese at around the same time, also for nationalist reasons, but coincident with the brutal suppression of student protest. Again, Malaysian policymakers appear not to have looked explicitly to (or at least, did not cite) regional examples in deploying the new language policy.
5. The term of art is *competitive electoral authoritarian*, but a democracy-with-adjectives approach reflects more accurately how citizens tend to understand the state and how the regime legitimates its continuation and accommodates or constrains its challengers.
6. J. D. Higham, Minute, 9 July 1951, TNA: PRO CO717/202/7.
7. For more on the *Fajar* case, see Poh, Tan, and Koh 2010; or Weiss 2011, chapter 2.
8. These groups were the University of Malaya Student Union (UMSU); the Gabungan Pelajar-Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS, Peninsular Malay Students' Union); and Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-Pelajar Malaysia (PKPM, National Union of Malaysian Students) (Silverstein 1970, 13–14; Kee 1976, 41–43).
9. Cheah Boon Kheng, "Right to Take Part in Politics," *Sunday Mail*, May 11, 1969.
10. Six new public universities were established in the 1980s–90s, and fifteen private ones between the time the Private Higher Education Institutions Act first allowed them in the mid-1990s and 2002. University enrollment doubled between 1990–97 alone (Loh 2005; Azmi 2000, 123–28), not even counting the hundreds of public and private technical schools, colleges, and other tertiary institutions now dotting the higher education landscape.
11. Teaching staff members were not immune; Sabiha Abdul Samad, co-editor of the popular left-wing journal, *Truth*, for instance, was detained without trial in 1975 for her purportedly procommunist and antinational articles, among related charges. Rahman Embong, interview with the author, March 29, 2006; Hishamuddin Rais, interview with the author, March 30, 2006; and Juliette Chin, interview with the author, December 23, 2006; Asia Forum on Human Rights n.d.: 130.

12. E. Terence Gomez, interview with the author, December 17, 2003.
13. Shabery Cheek, interview with the author, March 22, 2006.
14. Fathi Aris Omar, interview with the author, December 11, 2003.
15. *Sun*, September 19, 2006.
16. Up-to-date details are available on the Ministry of Higher Education website: http://www.mohe.gov.my/info_kpt.php?navcode=NAV004&lang=ENG (accessed May 31, 2007); also Santi 2001, 47–48.
17. Ministry of Higher Education, "Jadual 1.3: Jumlah Output Graduan dari Institusi Pengajian Tinggi, Tahun 2000–2005," http://www.mohe.gov.my/statisktik_v3/stat1.php (accessed May 18, 2007).
18. For instance: "Untuk elak pengangguran, Tolak MPP berimej pembangkang," *Akhbar Mahasiswa* 2004 (edisi khas): 1, 3.
19. *Malayan Undergrad*, April 27, 1957.
20. "U Attempt to Venture beyond the 'Ivory Tower' Is Praised," *Sunday Times*, November 20, 1960.
21. AFP newswire, June 15, 2009.
22. A UM demonstration outside the Soviet Embassy in Kuala Lumpur incurred the police's first use of tear gas against students. The protests then escalated, both on campus and in downtown Kuala Lumpur. Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak finally addressed the crowd at the Ministry of Home Affairs and then, meeting with a delegation, pledged an investigation into police methods and permit allocations. *Straits Times*, August 26, 28, 1968; Hassan 1984, 4, 7–8; Muhammad 1973, 71–72; Syed Hamid Ali, interview with the author, July 26, 2006.
23. Around five hundred students broke into the Philippines Embassy and tore down its flag and then continued to the Tunku's home. He approved their spirit, but not their methods (Silverstein 1970, 3; Muhammad 1973, 72–74).
24. Four students were among those arrested for participating in an NGO-led Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET II) in Kuala Lumpur in 1996. Yong Kai Ping, interview with the author, March 16, 2006.
25. Malay students led a two thousand-student demonstration in June 1971 in support of Muslims in Thailand's southern provinces, when Thai Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn visited Malaysia. Riot police confronted the students and then chased them down, teargassing them even in the UM mosque. Over a dozen students were injured and even more were arrested—sparking further protests against police brutality. *Mahasiswa Negara* 9, no. 7, June 21, 1971: 1, 12, 24; 9, no. 11, September 6, 1971: 17; and 9, no. 12, September 20, 1981: 2; *Straits Times*, June 15, 17, 19, and August 17, 1971; Hassan 1984, 7–8; Muhammad 1973, 145–52; Nagata 1980, 410.
26. Much of this activity has been under the Gabungan Pelajar Malaysia Anti Perang (GEMPAR, Malaysian Students' Anti-War Coalition), which nine student and youth groups formed after the start of hostilities in Iraq. GEMPAR urged the withdrawal of troops and prosecution of U.S. president George Bush by a war crimes tribunal. GEMPAR leaflets and press release, April 18, 2003.
27. A disturbing proportion of graduates today, especially of public universities,

remain unemployed long after graduation. *Malaysiakini*, November 5, 2005; *New Straits Times*, March 20 and September 20, 2005; Haslina 2002; *Malaysian Insider*, October 11, 2009.

28. *Malaysiakini*, June 1, 2005. Even committee member Khoo Kay Kim derided UM as "like a high school" now, unlike when he first arrived in 1964 (qtd. in *Malaysiakini*, December 13, 2006).
29. *Malaysiakini*, April 21 and 29, 2006.
30. *Star*, August 22, 2007; *New Straits Times*, September 6, 2007.

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9 THAILAND: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF STUDENT RESISTANCE

PRAJAK KONGKIRATI

Students played a crucial role in Thailand's national politics in the 1950s and became a formidable force between the late 1960s and 1970s. A democracy movement led by students culminated on October 14, 1973, when it toppled the long-standing military regime. This was one of the first student-led movements in Asia to truly overthrow a dictatorial regime. The students involved were influenced by other student movements around the world during the turbulent 1960s, and they likewise inspired others elsewhere.[1] Nevertheless, with the October 6, 1976, coup, students were brutally repressed by right-wing movements and the Thai state, and the October 1976 massacre came to be viewed as a traumatic episode in modern Thai history; therefore, it greatly dampened student activism (Thongchai 2002, 243–83). After the massacre, more than three thousand radical students went to the jungle and joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) fighting its "people's war" against the state. Later students became disillusioned with the CPT, criticizing and leaving the party and returning home with a sense of failure. Demoralization prevailed and led to a decline in student activism. Since then, though individual students and groups have been involved in politics intermittently, they have never succeeded in regaining the strength and influence they had during the 1970s. In major political struggles—and there have been several in Thailand since the 1970s—students now play a role of followers or at best supporters; they are no longer leaders of a people's movement.

This chapter argues that the changing patterns and scope of student activism in Thailand result from a combination of factors. Structural conditions, including expansion of higher education and rapid economic growth, initially facilitated the emergence of a student movement.

However, movement attributes, such as strategies and tactics, as well as organization and ideological frameworks, were also crucial. As social movements, student movements not only respond to political structure, but they also strategically overcome structural constraints, thereby reshaping their political context (Schock 2005, 35). In the Thai case, students succeeded in forging a close alliance with intellectuals during the period of military dictatorship (1957–73) and later with labor unions and peasants during the transition to democracy (1973–76). These alliances provided the student movement with intellectual and material resources crucial for activism. Fragmentation of state authority and the ruling elite was another crucial ingredient in the students' success. Furthermore, a decisive factor determining the role of the early student movement as a potent source of opposition was its ability to play the role of intellectual leader in constructing a counterhegemonic discourse against the ruling regime. The fact that students failed to do so after 1976 was a critical factor contributing to the decline of student activism and its influence.

This chapter thus investigates student activism by taking cultural politics into account, focusing on the intellectual movements of university students in Thailand before and after the 1973 uprising. It examines the ideological frameworks and repertoires of contention that prompted students to challenge state authority in each historical context. It looks at groups' discursive formation as well as the forms and methods of dissemination of their ideas and ideologies. This cultural politics narrative will be woven into an analysis that follows the analytical framework set forth in the introductory chapter in an attempt to explain the ebb and flow of student activism in modern Thailand.

The Emergence of a Thai Student Movement

Thai students began to emerge as an important political actor in national politics in the postwar period (1947–58). This period was a crucial transition phase in Thai politics, from the authoritarian constitutionalism of People's Party rule (1932–47) to military absolutism under field marshals Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn (1958–73). It was marked by great political instability and violence, with complex conflicts between individuals, groups, and organizations, and vibrant ideological struggles (Kasian 2001, 76). It was in this political context that students formed their first organizations and gradually became involved in political conflicts; they did so as a result of a confluence of three factors: the new

political environment, a changing pattern of higher education, and the influx of transnational ideas.

First, the new student activism arose from the new legal and political circumstances after the end of World War II. The abrogation of the Anti-Communist Act in 1946 and the liberal character of postwar governments opened space for political organizations to thrive. For the first time, student, labor, and other mass movements were permitted and recognized (Kasian 2001, 92–103).

Changes in higher education policies and institutions were no less important. Until the beginning of World War II, Thailand had only two universities, both government universities located in Bangkok. The oldest was Chulalongkorn, established in 1917 by King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). It was developed from the school for training of civil officials founded in 1899 in the royal palace. The university aimed to provide government officials with special skills needed by the absolute monarchy after the bureaucratic reforms of the late nineteenth century. It was originally intended as an exclusive place for the children of Siam's tiny elite. Thammasat University, the second oldest university, by contrast, was a product of the political revolution led by the People's Party in 1932. Pridi Banomyong, civilian leader of the party, established it only two years after the revolution. He believed it was of the utmost importance for the new regime to have a new kind of people. Thammasat, therefore, aimed to produce civic-minded citizens and democratic-spirited bureaucrats for the new constitutional regime. In contrast to Chulalongkorn, Thammasat started as an open-admission university, with no entrance exam and relatively cheap tuition; the goal was to be inclusive to all Thai citizens, including students from low-income families. By 1947, Thammasat had 16,429 registered students. Given the fact that the population of Bangkok was then around 557,000, this meant Thammasat students accounted for 3 percent of the city's population. This situation contrasted with Chulalongkorn, which was graduating fewer than 100 students a year (Charnvit 2000, 56–57).

Students at Thammasat, however, did not become involved in national politics until the war. The open-admission system ironically had a dampening effect on student activities. Though a remarkably high number of students were registered, most did not attend classes on campus. Many of them had part-time or full-time jobs outside the campus and thus usually studied independently, coming only on exam days (Charnvit et al. 1992, 95). This meant there was no student community on campus, with

virtually no student activities, let alone political mobilization. However, in the late 1940s the university changed its policy and required students to attend classes, making campus life more lively. Adding to the changing atmosphere, three more universities were established during the war—Silapakorn, Kasetsart, and Medical Science University. The creation of new universities, located in the capital city,[2] deepened student community life and broadened the scope of student activism with student organizations on each campus starting to coordinate their activities. The first such coordinated activities were sporting and social events, which, although apolitical, helped form close and friendly relationships and nurtured informal networks of student activists between different universities. Such networks were a resource eventually employed by student leaders in mobilizing for more serious and political purposes (Prajuab 2000, 361–80). From 1955, many student activists tried to turn their existing informal linkages into a formal organization. In September 1956, representatives from Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, Kasetsart, Silapakorn, and Medical Science met to prepare the Student Union of Thailand. The rules of the new organization stated that it would be a national political organization of university students fighting for democracy, social justice, and international peace. However, the union failed to materialize because of the coup that occurred not long after the meeting.

Throughout the postwar period, Thammasat students spearheaded student activism. The university's student committee was established in 1948 and was the first elected organization of students in Thailand (Prajuab 2000, 361–62).[3] Previously, during the World War II, the university had become the clandestine headquarters of the anti-Japanese Free Thai movement headed by the founder of the university, Pridi Banomyong. Many Thammasat students joined the movement during the war, and when the war ended many of them joined political parties led by Pridi and his allies. In February 1949, Pridi orchestrated a countercoup that aimed to seize power from Phibun (Plaek Phibunsongkhram) and his coup group, but his plan failed. About fifty Thammasat students, administrators, and faculty members took part in the attempt, and many of them were arrested, dismissed, or even murdered by the government. Subsequently, faculty and students at Thammasat University were closely monitored by the government, which tried to weaken student activism and depoliticize the university. However, government actions angered students and often led to protests.

Students' mobilizing activities in this postwar period were closely connected to off-campus politics. The Thammasat students who cooperated with faculty members and administrators in support of Pridi were an obvious case in point. Their actions can hardly be separated from national political competition in which Pridi played an integral part. In addition, the abrogation of the Anti-Communist Act in 1946 had allowed the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) to operate more openly through its many front organizations. Some student groups were affiliated to the CPT as front organizations. The party recruited many of its young members from radical Thammasat students, who helped it recruit additional members through their networks with students in other universities.[4] Certainly, there were times that university students planned and led actions themselves. But students were conscious that they, by and large, were part of a bigger movement.

Several conservative student groups also had linkages with political parties and the government. In general the conservative groups were less popular among their peers, often failing to get elected into the student councils and unions. The scope of their political involvement and influence was more limited than that of their radical counterparts. Occasional protest marches by conservative students, expressing their anticommunist stance, were logistically supported and partially planned by the conservative Prachathipat (Democrat Party) and the government. In the election campaign in November 1957, M. R. Seni Pramoj, the Prachathipat leader, publicly alleged that the Thammasat student election was rigged and the newly elected Thammasat student committee members were communists (Prajuab 2000, 374–77). Such incidents illustrate that student political activism and national power plays in the postwar period were closely intertwined.

The last factor contributing to the development of student activism in the postwar period was the spread of Marxist and socialist ideas. This period was the heyday of the influence of Marxism in modern Thai history (Reynolds and Hong 1983). In the free political atmosphere that followed the war, these previously banned ideas were publicized and openly disseminated. The rapidly changing international situation also stimulated interest in Marxist ideas. Progressive newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, and bookstores sprang up, along with communist and other left-leaning political parties, trade unions, and student organizations. Marxist and socialist literature was imported and then translated and appropriated by Thai leftist intellectuals. Marxist

ideas appeared in many literary forms and covered a wide range of fields, forming the main counterhegemonic discourse during the years 1946 to 1957 (Kasian 2001, 59).

Students, as a small educated elite, inevitably were targets of these radical ideas. A number of students became regular readers of radical publications, and thus they gradually absorbed the communist message. University students subsequently developed from being readers to producers and distributors of the ideas. Student clubs hosted numerous public and closed lectures and discussions and debates on Marxist theory and political issues. The Lecture and Debate Department of the Thammasat Student Committee was especially active. Student publications were another important channel for disseminating radical ideas (Prajak 2001). In terms of content, such publications covered a wide range of topics, including domestic and international affairs, criticisms of government policies, explications of Marxist theory, and discussions of the role of students in changing society. The last topic was perhaps the most popular one, and it appeared in almost every student publication. Sometimes, it appeared in fictional form as poems, short stories, and novels in which a student role model would be the main character. The authors of these fictional works consciously attempted to give a new meaning to the term *nakseuksa* (student). Repeatedly, the stories left the readers with a moral lesson that students were a tiny privileged class who owed a great deal to society because their education was made possible by the taxes paid by their country people. They, therefore, ought to pay society back by devoting their energy and knowledge not to themselves, but to other people, especially the poor and destitute. A popular slogan among student activists in this period was "Study to serve people."[5] Through lengthy, continuous discussion, a sense of who students were and the roles they ought to assume was defined. A shared collective student identity came into being, offering an embedded sense of collective agency and facilitating subsequent political mobilization.

Their leftist ideology inspired some students to mobilize in protest actions through the 1950s. In May and September 1957, for instance, students from Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Kasetsart organized protest marches and rallies in Sanam Laung (a famous park located near the royal palace and Thammasat University) and on campuses, demanding the government replace its pro-American foreign policy with neutrality. Students also became entangled in events surrounding the national political crisis of 1957–58. With looming prospects of confrontation

between different cliques led by competing military figures in the Phibun government, student groups played a part in exacerbating the situation. On March 2, 1957, four days after the victory of Phibun's party in the general election, Chulalongkorn students led a march in which other citizens and opposition politicians also participated. They accused the government party of rigging the results. The march had the tacit support of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the political rival of Phibun, who signaled to the students that he was on their side. The protest ended with the storming of Government House. Sarit managed to calm down the situation, and after this incident, the legitimacy of the Phibun government deteriorated sharply, while Sarit built an image as a hero of the people (Thak 1979). Eventually, Sarit and his followers staged a coup on September 16, 1957, toppling the Phibun government and thus ending the transitional postwar period, and introducing a new military absolutism.

Immediately after the coup, some student activists sympathized with Sarit, believing he would end government corruption and change its foreign policy. They soon realized they were wrong when Sarit led another coup (against his own government) on October 19, 1958, and declared martial law the following day, banning all political movements and organizations. The student activism of the postwar period came to a disruptive end at this point. Hindered by the iron hand of military rule, the tradition of student activism could not be passed smoothly to the next generation. Its historical legacy, however, would be revived by activists in the late 1960s.

In summary, student political activism first emerged in Thailand in the postwar period. At this time, Thailand still had only a few elite government universities. Only a handful of the country's youth could aspire to enroll in them. Students were part of a tiny educated elite being trained to become state bureaucrats or professionals. With their high social status and the spread of Marxist-communist ideas, however, some students started developing a sense of social mission, giving a new meaning to the term *nakseuksa* (student) and creating a new student collective identity. Nevertheless, their political engagement, though full of energy and determination, was limited in scope and influence.

The Zenith of Student Activism: The Late 1960s and the 1970s

Between 1957 and 1973, Thailand was under the autocratic military rule of Sarit Thanarat (1958–63) and Thanom Kittikhachon (Sarit's right-hand

man; 1963–73). Sarit was a product of local army training and had never been familiar with democratic or constitutional principles. He rejected Western democracy and adopted a benevolent despotic style of rule borrowed from ancient Thai rulers (Thak 1979). Political space shrank, and freedom of political association and expression was severely restricted. Nevertheless, these two successive authoritarian governments were responsible for massive expansion of higher education, rapid economic growth, and dramatic social transformation. The developmentalism of the Sarit-Thanom period thus created conditions favorable to the mobilization of students on a scale unprecedented in modern Thai history.

The story of student activism in the dictatorial period is complicated. Many students started with illusions about the regime, suddenly switching to quiescence after the declaration of martial law in 1958 and gradually becoming more assertive after the death of Sarit in 1963. Activism gathered momentum after the passing of a new constitution in 1968 and the general election in 1969, and it peaked after the coup and abrogation of the constitution in 1971. In October 1973, student demonstrations succeeded in bringing an end to the most abusive military regime in Thai history.

The period between 1957 and 1973 witnessed the rise of university students as one of the most significant political groups in Thai society, and it was in this period that Thai students played their most active and influential role in national politics. Following the framework set out in the introduction to this volume, this was a period of disruptive massification in which the institutions of higher education expanded very rapidly but were not yet commercialized. Consequently, the university student community was significantly larger and more socially diverse, but it still retained a privileged and elite status. The overall effect was that the potential of students as a strategic political group significantly increased.

Sarit's education policy was created to serve economic development plans designed and pushed by the United States and the World Bank. Aiming at greater market competition, private investment, and the development of modern service and industrial sectors, policymakers assumed that Thailand needed a more educated workforce. The new education policy increased the number of both universities and students. University students increased from fifteen thousand to one hundred thousand between 1961 and 1972, and universities increased from five to seventeen during the same period (Neher 1975, 1101). Significantly, higher education institutions spread throughout the country. A government university was

established in a provincial capital in each region: Chiang Mai University in the north in 1964, Khon Kaen University in the northeast in 1966, and Prince of Songkla University in the south in 1968 (Prajak 2005, 46). Another important phenomenon was the establishment of Ramkhamhang in Bangkok in 1971. Ramkhamhang was created as an open-admission university with no entrance system and low tuition, providing low-income and less brilliant youths the opportunity to gain student status. Students from this university were important in the student activism that led to the October 14 regime ousting. The proliferation of universities also had symbolic and political meaning, particularly for the middle class who viewed higher education as an avenue to wealth and social status. As Benedict Anderson noted, "Sizeable numbers of Thai began to desire and to have some access to career-oriented educations for their children, educations which, past history suggested, were the badges of, or the avenues to, elevated social status—above all entry into the secure upper reaches of state bureaucracy" (1998b, 151).

Another aspect of policy in this period was the promotion of specific disciplines. In expanding higher education, the government aimed to prioritize knowledge in science and technology, believing that only technocratic knowledge would contribute to economic development. Humanities and social sciences, by contrast, were seen as unimportant or useless. The government tried to control the number of courses and students in these fields. All the government universities founded in the 1960s offered programs focusing on hard and applied science. Thammasat, however, did not follow this trend but still emphasized humanities and social sciences; the university even established new departments and recruited more students in these fields (Prajak 2005, 64–67). It was precisely social science and humanities students who tended to participate in activism. Such students were trained to analyze social issues and so developed a more acute sense of the sociopolitical problems facing Thailand. Most of the key student activists in the October 1973 movement had humanities backgrounds. Given its disciplinary focus (and its location close to Government House, the parliament, and Sanam Laung), it was no accident that Thammasat was a center of student activism throughout this period.[6]

University students were still a minority, accounting for fewer than 5 percent of Thailand's population (Prajak 2005, 73). However, their increasing numbers in the 1960s gave them stronger political leverage by enabling bigger protests and providing a larger pool of students for recruitment

into activism. More significant was the symbolic value of "student" as a social category. The government and media attached a high value to students' status as a privileged elite and also had high hopes that they would become leaders bringing progress and prosperity to the country. Student events, even nonpolitical ones such as entertainment and sport, became nationally important events and attracted public attention. Student activists were conscious of their elite status, but in a different manner from their nonactivist peers. They believed they should not exploit that status for their own benefit. Instead they developed a notion of social debt, explaining that students had better life opportunities than most because they were supported by the taxes of others and they should thus use their privileged status to benefit the less fortunate. They argued they should help solve social problems, act as the voice of poor, and oppose government wrongdoings. By the late 1960s, such discourse was popular among students.[7] Students thus gave a new meaning to the category "student," forming a shared collective identity that challenged the official identity being imposed by the military regime, which aimed to depoliticize students and define their role in narrowly technocratic terms.

One activity that was popular among students in the 1960s, and reflected the idea of paying social debts, was the undertaking of development projects in distant rural areas. In every school break, students would volunteer to spend one to two weeks in a poor region, helping the residents develop their villages (by building libraries, public toilets, schools, or village halls). These rural development projects were initially sponsored by the government and its national security units, which saw them as assisting the government's counterinsurgency program (Kanok 1983).[8] In the beginning, many students still held developmentalist ideas while they were pursuing these activities, believing they were bringing progress to backward regions; some saw these ventures as building their own leadership skills.[9] Nonetheless, through these activities, students encountered conditions of abject poverty and hardship that sharpened their awareness of the gap between government programs and social realities, an unexpected and undesirable consequence as far as the regime was concerned.

However, the growing influence of student activists did not stem only from their swelling numbers and changing symbolic meaning, but also from students' role as intellectual leaders of society who dared speak truth to the powers that be. They were a pioneering group that increasingly openly criticized and opposed the military government, in

a context where the Sarit and Thanom regimes had emasculated civil and political society, suppressed organized labor and other political movements, made business classes dependent on the state, and co-opted middle-class professionals.

This does not mean, however, that critical culture was the norm even on campus. Thai universities in the 1960s were, as now, sites of a syndrome of political apathy, especially at first. Most students were preoccupied with their degrees, sports, ballroom dances, and romantic fancies. This political apathy was partly a consequence of the strict controls of the Sarit government, which imposed regulatory controls on campuses to constrain the possibility of student protests, restructured student organizations, and banned all political mobilization by students. Sarit also tried to eliminate the memory of student activism in the postwar period by banning radical publications and putting progressive journalists, writers, intellectuals, and student leaders in jail. The regime was successful for many years in disconnecting the new generation from their radical forerunners. Student protest activities under Sarit and in the early days of the Thanom government, if they happened at all, tended to focus on narrowly defined campus issues, such as tuition and education facilities.

But over time, there emerged small groups of progressive-minded students, some of whom had rural or underprivileged backgrounds. Some were also bright middle-class students who had traveled and been exposed to more critical media outside Thailand. Despite state controls on the flow of information, such people managed to form informal networks of independent writers and readers, producing, sharing, and circulating alternative publications. Students also made connections with intellectuals both inside and outside of campus. These connections provided students with intellectual guidance, radical ideas, and protection. Elsewhere, I have dubbed this phenomenon the emergence of a network of discourses in which the publications of students and intellectuals became in effect a forum for alternative public discourse and critical ideas in a society long dominated by the dictatorial regime's propaganda (Prajak 2005). Students really did succeed in exerting great cultural and intellectual influence before they ventured into the streets.

Among the pioneer publications was the *Sangkhomsat Parithat* (*Social Science Review*), under the helm of Sulak Sivaraksa, a royalist-conservative intellectual, and later Suchart Sawassi, a progressive student from Thammasat. From the early 1960s, a popular activity among progressive-minded students was producing self-published newsletters called one-baht

journals and selling them at university gates, thus avoiding state registration requirements. Students had no need to compromise with the profit-making logic of the free market, so it was very common to find the most critical and subversive ideas in them rather than in other publications. Such publications began to emerge even more openly after the death of Sarit (1963), when controls on expression were slightly loosened; they then flourished after the passage of the new constitution in 1968. Several were short-lived because of state intimidation, censorship, and bans. A few went underground, especially after the 1971 coup, resulting in widespread circulation of underground magazines and pamphlets on campus and beyond. Overall, for a period of more than a decade in the late 1960s and 1970s—through the publications that they produced and passed from hand to hand, and through the networks that sustained them—students developed a thriving, though not always visible, counterhegemonic discourse. While the ruling elite relied on military force, students and intellectuals used ideas, ideology, and the printed page as their weapons.

A Mixture of Discourses and Repertoires of Contention

The emergent student-intellectual movements were marked by an unusual mix of ideological discourses, including nationalism, old and new leftisms, and royalism. An eclectic jumble of ideas appeared in student publications. For instance, one highly influential booklet titled *Phai Khao* (White Peril), produced by a group of Thammasat students in 1971, that criticized the role of the American and Thai governments in the Vietnam War, contained translations of Bertrand Russell and Noam Chomsky, a reprint of a critique of imperialism by a Thai Marxist intellectual from the postwar period, and a quotation from a famous writing by King Rama VI (Sapha Na Dome 1971).

The movements' nationalism was the product of domestic and international politics, notably Thailand's unofficial collaboration with the United States in the Indochina War.[10] The Cold War had helped shape the military dictatorship, with Thai military leaders claiming that military-based rule was needed to defend the country from communism. American military aid and construction of airbases on Thai territory were deemed indispensable to the defense of national sovereignty. State-run radio and TV stations repeatedly warned that Thailand was at risk of succumbing to communist expansion from her Indochinese neighbors. In this official narrative, the country's goal was to preserve its freedom and

sovereignty; the country's foes were communist nations such as China, Cambodia, and Vietnam; and Thai nationals who subscribed to communism were traitors.

Students and intellectuals campaigned against the United States' imperialist military presence in Thailand and the Thai state's complicity in U.S. attacks on Indochinese countries. Thai students and intellectuals formulated an alternative nationalism that borrowed substantially from official nationalism,[11] still stressing the goal of national sovereignty, but blaming the military regime for exposing the country to an imperial power by its complicity in the Indochina War. Thus, it became a task of student activists to lead the public to expel American military forces and establish relations with Thailand's neighbors.[12]

The emergence of alternative nationalism among students did not happen overnight. Systemic censorship hampered public knowledge of Thai involvement in the Indochina War. Ironically, it was the flow of news from the Western world, notably from the United States itself, that awoke the Thai public to what was going on in their own country. The U.S. congressional hearings about U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, spearheaded by Senator William Fulbright, and the subsequent leak of *The Pentagon Papers*, caused a sensation in Thailand. These documents were translated and published by students and intellectuals,[13] as were reports on the war from the *New York Times*, *New Statesman*, *Ramparts*, and other Western media.

The student movement's New Left inclinations were initially the result of their exposure, through study abroad and imported publications, to the ideas of the New Left in the United States and Europe. In the Thai version, the focus of the New Left was on the potential of youth to transform society and their rebellion against the authoritarian and capitalist establishment, and against the conservative ideology of "Thainess," which emphasized hierarchy, order, and conformity. Stories of student protests in France in 1968, and elsewhere in Europe and the United States, attracted great attention from Thai student activists.[14] The political activities, campus life, and opinions of students in Asian countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines, India, China, and Japan (particularly the Zengakuren movement), occupied much space in student publications and discussions.[15] Through reading and discussion, Thai students, though physically distant, connected themselves in their imagination to a global movement of student activists. In this way,

international diffusion of ideas played a crucial role in emboldening student activism in Thailand.

The burgeoning interest in the New Left also moved some students to explore works by the earlier postwar Thai leftist intellectuals, obtained through personal contacts, university libraries and used-book markets. In certain cases, members of the Communist Party supplied the rare materials themselves (Prajak 2005, chap. 5). These rediscovered works were then reproduced, disseminated, and adapted for political reuse. Far from being an alien import, this excavated and recycled Thai socialist discourse enjoyed a second life in the new struggle against dictatorship, contributing alongside New Left ideas to the emergent antiregime discourse.

Of the various contesting discourses, perhaps the most prevalent and effective revolved around the monarchy as an institution. Until 1973, the monarchy demonstrated a close affinity with university students, with the king giving a series of annual speeches to these future leaders of the country. Some of the activists who revived Thai leftist works were the very same individuals who praised the monarchy for its farsighted, democratic leadership. By rereading the past in the light of royal-nationalist ideology, they made the monarchy not only the savior of the nation from Western colonial powers but also a fighter for people's rights and liberty.[16] The discursive amalgam of royal-democratic-nationalism was adopted by many student and intellectual activists and other citizens, both for the political and psychological solace it provided and as a safe way to critique the corrupted military dictatorship. This strategy was most evident when, in their leaflets, students reprinted selections of Rama VII's speech following his 1934 abdication demanding the Thanom regime pass a democratic constitution.

Despite their differences, these disparate political discourses shared two common goals that wove them together at the particular political conjuncture of the early 1970s: opposition to military dictatorship and a call for democracy. The diversity of student movement discourses, instead of weakening their movement, strengthened it by making students versatile political actors able to form political alliances with many different social groups. Eventually, the various discourses came together in the popular uprising of October 14, 1973.

Regime Divisions

Fragmentation in the ruling elite was a crucial condition for the growing influence of the Thai student movement before October 1973. As some scholars suggest, divided governmental authority often provides opportunities for social movements to mobilize or radicalize (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, Obershall 1996). In Thailand, student action not only took advantage of divisions in the military regime, but it also helped to deepen those divisions (compare with Aspinall 1995 and 2005 on Indonesian student activism). Indeed, demonstrations and other activities by students from the late 1960s created divisions among Thai elites. The most significant divide was within the army, but there were also signs of tension between the army and the palace, especially after the 1971 coup. From the late 1960s on, the king began to make public comments on political issues, and he often mentioned student protests and gave moral support to students campaigning against corruption and abuse of power. Regarding the government, he generally endorsed it, believing a strong military role was needed to uphold the monarchy and defeat the communists. Nevertheless, he frequently criticized the government's policies when he thought they had gone in the wrong direction, and he did so more strongly in the early 1970s (Prajak 2005, 468–73). The presence of the monarchy as an independent power center within the regime eventually became vital to the success of student mobilization in toppling the regime.

Within the army, there also was simmering conflict over political succession because both Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and his assumed successor, Field Marshal Praphat Charusathien, were approaching retirement. Decisions to extend their tenure in 1971 and 1972 angered other senior generals who believed they were losing opportunities to attain the top positions. Signs of a dynastic succession, unprecedented in the Thai army, occurred after the 1971 coup, when it became increasingly clear that Colonel Narong Kittikachorn, who was both Prime Minister Thanom's son and Praphat's son-in-law, was to become the political heir of the Thanom-Praphat clique (Morell and Chai-anan 1981, 145–47). The Thanom regime was taking on sultanistic features. Generally, rulers of sultanistic regimes tend to personalize government and blur the boundaries between the private and public sphere (Chehabi and Linz 1998). But such regimes, Stepan and Linz (1996) argue, are more prone to a democratic transition initiated by an uprising of civil society or sudden

collapse, rather than a regime-controlled transition. The extremely personalistic nature of such regimes, they argue, also makes them more likely to resort to violence to try to save themselves (Linz and Stepan 1996, 38–40, 68–70). Thanom's regime was no exception.

After the 1971 coup, senior officials in the army excluded from Thanom's faction gradually formed an opposing faction led by General Krit Sivara, the commander in chief. This division provided an opportunity for the student movement to secure political protection and mobilize, and it was critical in October 1973. The attempt by Thanom and Praphat to suppress the student-led demonstrations on October 14 and 15 largely failed because General Krit refused to carry out an order to use the troops under his control to crack down on protestors (Kullada 2007, 367–68). The intervention of the king on the side of the Krit faction and the students, plus the persistence and fearlessness of the protestors even after initial killings, rendered military suppression ineffective.

Toward Uprising

After a network of discourse had been forming for quite some time, an opportunity for political mobilization arose when the government promulgated a new constitution in 1968. The political activism of students gathered momentum from this time, peaking in October 1973. The mixture of political discourses they promoted, elaborated previously, was now manifested in their political mobilizations.

Soon after the new constitution came into effect, a number of students marched to Government House to demand that the government reduce bus fares and the price of basic goods, amend certain articles of the new constitution, stop sending troops to Vietnam, and investigate corruption involving the Bangkok mayor.[17] Students became more organized in December 1968 when students from fifteen universities and colleges set up the Student Volunteer Group to Observe the National Election (held in February 1969). Their voluntary role in monitoring the election was praised by the media and general public, though some students were intimidated by officials when observing polling stations. The election observation group later evolved into the Student Volunteer Group of Thailand, which organized many kinds of activities, including summer work camps in rural areas.

An important landmark event was the establishment of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) in late 1969. This was the fulfillment

of the aborted attempt in 1956 to create a Student Union of Thailand. NSCT soon became the coordinating center of student activism. Students in each university also formed their own informal political groups in addition to the formal organization of NSCT and its student unions. These independent groups often recruited the most talented students in each campus and were highly active. They also tended to be more radical and left leaning than the formal bodies. Many of their members studied Marxist ideas and used them to analyze the political situation in Thailand.[18] These groups were connected to one another and produced a core group of student leaders who were later responsible for organizing the mass demonstrations of October 1973. The most prominent of these independent groups were the Sapha Na Dome, Sethatham, and Puying group at Thammasat, the Feun Foo Sotus Mai and Seuksa Panha Karn Muang group at Chulalongkorn, the Rong Ngaan Sethasart and Sapha Kafe group at Kasetsart, the Khon Roon Mai group at Ramkamhaeng, and the Valanchathat group at Chiang Mai. The independent groups had around ten to fifty members each and were loosely organized. Most of their members were social science and humanities students.

The political activism of students did not stop after the coup in November 1971. The coup makers abrogated the 1968 constitution, dissolved parliament, and disbanded political parties. Students were the only group who dared to mobilize against the regime. They were nonetheless prudent and began by choosing issues that did not directly attack the military government. By doing so, they retained a space for mobilization and maintained political momentum. In November 1972, Thirayut Boonmee, a Chulalongkorn student who was the newly elected NSCT secretary general, launched a big weekly public campaign to boycott Japanese goods. Students went out to shopping malls to persuade people to buy Thai products. This nationalistic campaign was highly successful and made NSCT well known nationwide. The media reported on the campaign in detail, and the government called the organizers patriots who were protecting the national interest; the Thanom government did not ban the campaign because it endorsed the economic policy of the government, which aimed to protect the leading Thai business groups from competition from Japan. The success of the campaign was a tremendous boost for students' political morale.

Next, in December 1972, students succeeded in stopping an attempt by the government to assert executive control over the judiciary through decree. They received strong support from the media and the Lawyers'

Association of Thailand. In February 1973, Thammasat student unions organized a week on Indochina at the Thammasat Hall, with films, exhibitions, and public seminars about the war and the involvement of the Thai government in it. Similar activities were held in Chiang Mai University two months later.

Students were now emboldened by their previous successes and began to directly criticize abuses of power by the regime. Student publications became more and more radical. In June 1973, nine members of the Khon Roon Mai group were expelled from Ramkhamhaeng University for publishing a magazine full of savage political satire targeting the university administration and the military government. Their expulsion angered other students; the NSCT organized a sit-in protest at the Democracy Monument in Bangkok, demanding dismissal of the rector (the head of the university) and restored student status for those who were expelled. An extraordinary fifty thousand people joined the protest, many seeing the demonstration as a chance to protest about other issues. Student leaders used the opportunity to demand that the government promulgate a new constitution within six months and restore democracy. This was the biggest demonstration organized by students so far, and it was the first time they raised the issue of the constitution publicly.

Soon afterward, students formed the Demanding Constitution Group and started a public campaign. On October 6, 1973, while members of the group were distributing leaflets near the Democracy Monument, police arrested thirteen of them. They were charged with treason. In response, the Thammasat student union and NSCT held a protest on the Thammasat campus from October 6 through October 13, with the government still ignoring their demand for the immediate release of the detainees. On October 13, with no answer from the government, the protestors marched to the Democracy Monument. It was estimated that half a million people participated in this historic student-led demonstration, the biggest political gathering in Thai history. On October 14, riot police clashed with a group of unarmed, defenseless demonstrators in front of the royal palace, followed by even more drastic action by the military and the police. The situation rapidly deteriorated into riots throughout the city. Protestors made desperate efforts to defend themselves, and many of them, angered by the killings of civilians they had witnessed, reacted with spontaneous attacks on government buildings. Efforts at violent suppression failed when both the king stepped in and another army faction succeeded in a silent coup. The Thanom-Praphat group had to step

down, its leaders fled the country, and military rule collapsed. Student activism had begun a new chapter in Thai history.

Radicalization of the Student Movement after 1973

The political landscape changed significantly after the collapse of the military government in 1973. The student movement adopted increasingly open socialist ideology and objectives. Its political discourse became less diversified, with royalist ideas being abandoned. This ideological shift made it difficult for the student movement to secure protection from the monarchy. On the contrary, the more the students moved to the left, the more they directly confronted the whole ruling class, particularly the royalists. The latter considered student radicalization a major threat to the survival of traditional institutions. Eventually, the conservative ruling elite launched decisive and brutal suppression to end student activism in the October 6, 1976, massacre.

The 1973 uprising ushered in an extraordinary period of civilian democracy. Under the interim regime of Prime Minister Sanya Thammasak (October 1973 to February 1975), the country witnessed more open political participation than in any preceding period. Press censorship disappeared, genuine trade unions were rapidly formed and pressed a host of demands through strikes and marches, and peasant organizations were created to urge land reform; even high school pupils demanded the expulsion of hated principals (Anderson 1998a, 269–70). Meanwhile, student leaders had become heroes for many Thais. People, especially the poor and marginalized, viewed the student movement as a channel to articulate their interests on a diverse range of problems, and many sought help from students.

Radicalization of students happened as a result of two parallel factors. The first was the influx of Marxist ideas from China and the West, and the revival of Thai radical ideas from the past. This was a continuation of a trend that began prior to 1973, as discussed previously. However, with the sudden disappearance of dictatorial control, the barriers to political learning also were completely removed. Intellectuals and students freely imported radical ideas from various sources: Maoism from China, New Left ideas from the United States and Europe, and Marxist-Leninist ideology from the former Soviet Union. They translated and published works that once had been banned, including classical Marxist texts. Marxist ideas provided students with new tools to interpret political and social

problems, and they began to pepper their analysis with discussion of commercialization of agriculture, foreign domination of the economy, labor exploitation, feudalism, and other sophisticated concepts. By thinking in these terms, they rejected conservative ideology that emphasized the historical centrality and nationalist legitimacy of the army as well as the monarchy (Flood 1975, 55).

The second factor causing radicalization was students' firsthand experiences in rural areas. Shortly after the new democratic regime began, the student movement concluded that democracy was very fragile because the Thai people lacked experience of democratic practices and institutions. They then took on the task of promoting democratic values as one of the most important goals of the movement. They proposed this idea to the new civilian government. In 1974, the Sanya government gave the State University Bureau 15 million baht ($750,000) to dispatch students to rural villages throughout the country to "propagate democracy," which entailed educating peasants on their rights and duties in a democratic system (Pasuk and Baker 1995, 303). Unexpectedly, this project led students to discover a cause that they found to be even more important than democracy. They discovered the state-neglected, resource-depleted, and impoverished countryside (Seksan 1988, 106).

From this point on, student movement leaders realized that the authoritarian regime had left Thai society not only with an unpleasant political legacy, but also with socioeconomic malaise. The development strategy of the military dictatorship had created deep structural disparities between the prosperous city and the impoverished countryside (Kasian 2004, 21–37). The student movement gradually became more involved in trying to solve the villagers' problems of socioeconomic injustice. Yet when they talked about minimum wages or land reform, student activists were labeled by the ruling group as communists.

Alliance Building and the Countermovement

The student movement thus not only maintained pressure on the government to sustain constitutional democracy, but it also broadened its agenda to include issues of social and economic justice. Students campaigned for ending the American use of Thailand as a military base for the Vietnam War. They helped organize labor strikes, formed a new coordinating body of the labor movement, and pressured the government for labor reforms. The years 1973 and 1974 witnessed 501 and 357 strikes,

respectively, each more than in the entire previous decade. These strikes dealt mostly with improving wages and working conditions. Many strikes succeeded, and in 1974, the government raised the minimum wage and passed a new labor law, which legalized labor unions and created a new dispute resolution machinery (Pasuk and Baker 2005, 189).

Peasants also started to mobilize. In early 1974, peasants in the northern region demanded higher paddy prices, controls on rents, and allocation of land to landless peasants. In June 1974, two thousand peasants traveled to Bangkok to stage a rally. Later in the same year, they founded the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT), the membership of which reached nearly 1.5 million. FFT leaders traveled to villages around the country educating peasants about their rights. The student movement helped FFT frame issues and negotiate with government officials. Again, the civilian government reacted positively to FFT demands by establishing a price support scheme and introducing the Land Rent Control Act (Kanoksak 1985). In May 1975, students, workers, and peasants announced a tripartite alliance to fight for social and economic justice.

This alliance began to threaten the traditional beliefs, economic interests, and political power of more privileged groups, including generals, business leaders, rural landlords, bureaucrats, and royalists (Pasuk and Baker 2005, 190). Some factions in the army were increasingly alarmed by the spread of radical ideas, which challenged the military's concept of a controlled orderly society and its national security policy. The student movement's campaign for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Thailand was especially threatening. Many such elite actors believed the civilian government was favoring students, peasants, and labor unions. They viewed this as a result of parliamentary democracy that was too weak and accordingly looked to extraparliamentary tactics.

The middle class also was frustrated with increasing student radicalism. The middle class had supported students in October 1973, with many enthusiastically participating in the uprising because of their dissatisfaction with the corruption, incompetence, and abuse of power of the military regime. However, this did not imply that their support for the student movement was permanent or unconditional. After October 1973, many in the middle class became horrified by student extremism, the prevalence of labor strikes, and peasant mobilizations. They feared that the daily protests would frighten away foreign investors and end the long economic boom. With little experience in democratic politics and an insecure political mentality, it was the middle class that provided the

social base for a new right-wing countermovement, whose leadership and institutional backing was provided by the ruling elites.

Rightists employed a social-mobilization style of politics to compete against the coalition of peasants, laborers, and students (see Prajak 2006). Increasingly, confrontational and violent tactics by the Right, combined with government inaction, had a great effect on the student movement. Students had to divert part of their resources to reacting to their opponents and defending themselves. Unable to trust the state to protect them, they had to resort to extra-institutional tactics that led toward a greater confrontation with their right-wing opponents. The escalation of violence led to political turmoil and, ultimately, paved the way for the military coup of October 6, 1976. In broader perspective, what happened in Thailand during 1973–76 presents evidence for how difficult democratic transition by regime collapse can be (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986, 8–17). Nonetheless, this author would disagree with those who point the finger at progressive reformers when democratic transitions break down in such circumstances. The Thai experience suggests that it was not the radicalization of the student movement and its allies alone that was responsible for the failure of democracy, but the complex, if not manipulated, interaction between the student movement, right-wing movements, and the state.

After the 1976 Massacre: Repression, Disillusionment, and Decline

The October 6, 1976, tragedy marked the beginning of the end of the political vanguard role of Thai students. From that point, student activism has been in a state of virtual inertia. Student groups have at no point regained their distinct role as a highly influential antigovernment force. To understand the decline of student activism, a combination of factors needs to be considered: a changing political regime, the lasting effects of brutal suppression, a decline of radical political discourse, commercialization of the higher education system, and a rise of other civil society groups.

After October 6, 1976, Thai society was briefly ruled under the civilian dictatorship of Thanin Kraivixien, who pursued dictatorial policies involving total deprivation of basic rights. Student activists were so threatened that many were unable to remain in urban centers, and around three thousand of them fled to join the armed struggle of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in rural areas. Disenfranchised from other forms of social change, students accepted the revolutionary

path of the CPT. Nevertheless, a number of students did not go into the jungle; as colleges and universities disallowed freedom of expression, those who wanted to continue working to change social conditions had to organize secretly.

General Kriengsak Chamanand overthrew the Thanin government on October 20, 1977. His new government relaxed some policies allowing for limited freedom of expression and creating a semidemocracy (Chaianan 1989, 305–46). Various student clubs began to organize and call for a revival of a truly independent student body. The Student Group for Freedom and Democracy was formed on February 28, 1978. It quickly held several key activities: hosting a welcome party for nineteen innocent people who were arrested during the October 6 massacre, setting up a committee to help people affected by floods, opposing the government of Vietnam's policy of expelling boat people, and opposing an oil price hike. While these actions were not hugely sensitive, they represented an attempt to search for a new role in a changed environment.

However, this attempt soon corroded and turned into confusion. Student activists' determination was replaced by discouragement, as their beliefs were tested and eventually shaken into a state of what they themselves called a "crisis of faith" (Boonsom 1981, 242–52). To put it briefly, this was a crisis of faith in socialism and communism, which leading activists had adhered to since the early 1970s. Two key factors stand out as the reasons behind this phenomenon. First, the Kriengsak administration's policies appeared to be more democratic than those of the past, and other groups in society—including business people, the middle class, and some sectors of the military—began to endorse democracy as well. As a result, students became unsure of their role. Second, and perhaps more important, was the breakdown in the relationship between students and the CPT. Students who had fled to the maquis became disillusioned with the CPT's undemocratic behavior, intellectual narrowness, and blind adherence to China. Most left the jungle in the mid-1980s, and some returnees began to heavily criticize the CPT.

These factors led to a decline of student activism. To the extent that any has remained over subsequent decades, it has changed form. In the 1980s, student activities occurred primarily through discussion groups and writings, not organized political mobilization. The most-often discussed topic was what the sociopolitical role of students should be in a changing society. Such discussions almost always ended inconclusively, and the students involved eventually showed indifference to the

topic (Thamrong 1985, 28–30; Boonsom 1981, 242–52). Many of them thought it was a waste of time to have endless debate over this issue. Discussing the role and meaning of being *nakseuksa* could not energize a new generation. Consequently, a new student collective identity failed to emerge.

The status of students was also less noble or elitist in a new period of democratization of higher education. From the mid-1980s onward, higher education in Thailand became a truly mass commodity as institutions of higher education proliferated, diversified, and specialized. The number of higher education institutions increased from only 17 in the mid-1970s to 165 by 2008.[19] There is now also greater diversity in the sector than in the past, with a wide range of limited-admission, open-admission, and autonomous public universities, private universities, and technical and community colleges. The rapid expansion of the higher education sector resulted from government policies, the needs of the business community, and pressures from provincial politicians and civil society groups. A strong push from the latter two forces was a main reason for higher education institutions' eventually being established in every province. The total number of university students also increased dramatically from 100,000 in 1972, to 677,480 in 1985, 800,441 in 1998, and 1,979,782 in 2008.[20]

Consolidated massification of the higher education system has produced debilitating effects on student activism. It lessened the significance and symbolic meaning of university student status. Students are no longer a tiny and exclusive elite who possess rare, special knowledge and live separately from the rest of the population. The ruling elite and media are less likely to be respectful of students or feel compelled to be attentive to students' political opinions and activities. With the rise of civil society groups, nongovernmental organizations, and grassroots movements as a potent political force since the mid-1980s (Hewison 1997), the role of students as political vanguard has simply faded away. Some student groups reduced the scope of their activity to focus specifically on single-issue politics, such as gender or environmental issues. Some tried to revive the defunct NSCT, which was disbanded after the 1976 massacre. Eventually, the Student Federation of Thailand (SFT), a new national umbrella organization of students, was created in 1984. The group continues to exist, but its own members have several times proposed disbanding it since, they argue, it no longer plays any meaningful role in society (Phumvat 2005).

It is true that a small number of students still engage in political activism, but they typically do so as part of broad political or social

movements, rather than just as students. In general, student activists have aligned themselves with and lent support to prodemocracy activists, environmental groups, nongovernmental organizations, or grassroots movements in protests, but they have no longer been leaders of such movements. The case of the May 1992 antimilitary demonstrations, the protests against the Thaksin government and its allies in 2006 and 2008, and the anti-Abhisit government protests in 2009 and 2010 are three good examples of this. No one denies that students were involved in these antigovernment demonstrations, but it was clear that, compared to other social and political groups, they did not play a prominent leadership role in those incidents.[21]

Conclusion: Speaking Truth to Power

Thai students played a distinct vanguard role and were highly influential in politics from the late 1960s to 1970s. The influence of students did not stem merely from their numbers and privileged status, but mainly from their ability to play the role of intellectual leaders by constructing a counterhegemonic discourse against the ruling regime. They were also a pioneering group that dared speak truth to power, in a context where successive regimes had emasculated civil society, suppressed political movements, and co-opted middle-class professionals. Furthermore, student action not only took advantage of divisions in the ruling elites, but it also helped to deepen those divisions, which in turn created conditions favorable to mobilization. These factors explain the success story of Thai student activism in the 1970s. Students were not only shaped by political structure, but also strategically overcame structural constraints, thereby reshaping their political context.

But now it seems unlikely Thai students will be able to return to that apex. Economic, political, and educational trends have conspired to undermine the cohesion and influence of student activism and to strip political meaning from student identity. Nostalgic memories of the good old days, however, still linger. One should avoid glorifying those memories and transforming the student activists of the 1970s into deities. That would merely construct an unnecessarily high hurdle for future generations of students, at least some of whom also may want to step forward and work for the betterment of society. These students will need to find their own way of engaging in political activism.

Notes

1. For example, what happened in Bangkok in 1973 inspired student protestors in Indonesia in 1974 and Greek students in November 1973 (Charnvit 1993).
2. It was not until Sarit Thanarat's government (1958–63) that higher education spread to the provinces.
3. The committee lasted until 1958. When Sarit Thanarat came to power, he replaced it with a university administration-controlled club consisting of appointed lecturers and students.
4. Kasian Tejapira notes that during the postwar period about twenty Thammasat students worked as party cadres both in and outside the campus (Kasian 2001, 93, 101, 263–64).
5. Examples of these stories were Marut 1950 and Sriburapha 1950.
6. In 1986, the first hard science program was established at Thammasat. The relocation of some undergraduate programs to another campus outside Bangkok in the same year also impeded Thammasat student activism.
7. See, for example, an editorial of a Thammasat progressive student group called Sapha Na Dome; The Voluntary Student Group of Thailand 1970.
8. By the mid-1970s, it was estimated that the CPT had some eight thousand guerrillas, with 412 villages completely under CPT control, and six thousand villages under some CPT influence.
9. Thammasat University Archives, (2) mo. tu. 2.10.1 box 1, "Kitjakam nak seuk sa pho. so. 2506–2520" [Student activities, B. E. 1963–77].
10. During the Vietnam War, Thailand was the United States' most secure ally in mainland Southeast Asia. Thailand was also the most important aircraft hub for U.S. bomber planes, with 80 percent of all American bombs dropped in Indochina during the war being flown there from Thai soil. By 1973, there were twelve U.S. military bases and 550 U.S. warplanes in the country (Randolph 1986).
11. On Thai official nationalism, see Anderson 1991, 99–101.
12. The nationalist sentiment of student activists was manifested forcefully in many poems, for instance, Rawee 1973 and Vichit 1973. Both authors were Thammasat student leaders.
13. See *Sangkhomsat Parithat* 4, no. 3 (December 1966–February 1967), 10, no. 7 (July 1972), and 11, no. 10 (October 1973).
14. See, for instance, *Sangkhomsat Parithat* (student edition) 8 (September 1969): 39–42; *Vittayasarn parithat* 9 (May 5, 1970); 22 (November 20, 1970): 28–29, 58–59, 68–69.
15. Vitthayakorn 1972; for Indonesian, the Philippine, and Chinese student activities, see *Chaoban* 1, no. 2 (February 1972): 65–69; Thammasat Women Group 1972, 25–28; Chomrom Khon Roon Mai 1973, 21–24.
16. For exemplary articles, see *Laomfaang* (July 1973): 45; Paiboon 1972.
17. Information on student activities in the following passages is drawn from Morell and Chai-anan 1981, Radom 1974, and Prajak 2005.
18. A few of them began to establish connections with the Communist Party of

Thailand (CPT) prior to the 1973 uprising. However, before 1973 the CPT had little influence among students, and it played little role in the uprising.

19. The number and directory of higher education institutions in Thailand is available at the webpage of Ministry of Education of Thailand. See http://www.mua.go.th/data_main/directory_che.doc.
20. The information is drawn and calculated from Witayakorn 1996, 10, and Office of the Higher Education Commission 2008, 157.
21. It should be noted, however, that the role played by student groups led by the SFT in the movement that ousted General Suchinda Kraprayoon in May 1992 was more substantial than the role they played either in protests against Thaksin and his allies in 2006 and 2008, or in the protests against Abhisit government in 2009 and 2010.

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10 THE PHILIPPINES: STUDENTS, ACTIVISTS, AND COMMUNISTS IN MOVEMENT POLITICS

PATRICIO N. ABINALES

Comparatively speaking, Philippine student activism exhibits features comparable to that of Thailand. Like their Thai counterparts, Filipino activists have seen the struggles for student rights and welfare or campus democratization as battles not simply for the benefit of the student masses. They have also regarded these struggles as components of a quest for radical democracy or as part of a project to propel one to national office. This outlook has strong historical foundations: student leaders from all shades of the political spectrum regard themselves as legatees of antistate movements whose roots go back to the 1860s, when young Filipinos demanded reforms from the Spanish colonial regime.[1] Student activism—particularly when it made an impact—was something that cannot be segregated from the larger narrative of state-versus-opposition relations. This is not to say that there were no school protests in pursuit of strictly student concerns. There were indeed student strikes over school-specific grievances, but the more historically decisive mass actions were protests over national issues (Santiago 1972).[2]

This chapter looks at the two conjunctures in postwar Philippine history when student protest reached high numbers and spread across the nation, only to taper off just as it reached its zenith. The first was during the so-called First Quarter Storm (FQS) of the 1970s and the second between 1977 and 1980, when a state-mandated increase in tuition fees led to massive boycotts. In both events, front organizations of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) rallied students toward the party's national democratic revolution. But once the protests peaked, tensions began to develop within these organizations and between them and

their student masses. The cracks precipitated fierce debates among cadres over what to do with the student movement, and these only hastened the movement's decline.

These surges and their subsequent recession were outcomes of the fraught relationship between the student movement and the CPP. Given the ability of students to easily understand radical ideology when compared to other social groups' ability, they were easiest to recruit into the party, particularly in a time of profound political crisis. The CPP, however, could never trust students completely. They may have been accomplished pedagogues, talented ideologues, and fiery militants, but students were also petit bourgeois—the class that is remarkable for its opportunism and individualistic ambition and lacking the hardy commitment and toughness that the proletariat and the peasantry are known to possess (Sison 1995). The party's suspicions led it to demand that students shed their petit-bourgeois provenance and become true revolutionaries by abandoning their main arena of struggle—academe—and be one with the masses as guerrillas or full-time labor organizers. In short, to prove her commitment to communism, a student must cease to be a student.

The inspiration for this message was clearly Mao's invocation to learn from the masses, a theme of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that the fledgling CPP took to heart along with everything else that the great helmsman articulated. And it was not only Filipino students who were exhorted to stop thinking and acting like petit bourgeois; in countries such as South Korea, students also were called upon to become proletarian by leaving the schools and becoming factory workers, to live the life of proletarians in order to understand completely what capitalist/imperialist exploitation meant and why the industrial working class must lead the revolution.[3]

But to do so also requires either giving lesser priority to the struggles inside the school, or, where campus issues were salient, mobilizing students strategically around them, regardless of whether the issues could be resolved or not.[4] Moreover, treating academia as a training ground for the urban underground and/or the guerrilla zones meant ignoring its principal function as a set of institutions of higher learning—the development of critical minds. The revolution required its student cadres to educate the masses on the basic tenets of people's war, not spend their precious hours quibbling "over minute theoretical details and appear[ing] ridiculously like . . . ivory tower academic[s]."[5] The demands of the revolution would thus clash with the fundamental orientation of

the schools, and the CPP's requirements for proletarian purity contradicted the nature of the student as petit bourgeois. These tensions help explain why the surges of the early and late 1970s were swift, and their tapering off equally steep.

In short, whereas elsewhere such factors as changes in the nature of higher education or the progress of neoliberal economic development offer the greatest leverage in understanding shifts in student activism, here, the sole critical dimension, given the nature of Philippine politics and the history of students' and other sectors' mobilization, is the Communist Party. When the CPP courted and organized students, they could be significant players. To understand why undergraduates no longer mobilize politically to any noteworthy extent, one must look to changes in CPP strategy.

Young Party, Urban Firestorm, and Fragile Successes

The FQS—a series of violent confrontations between student demonstrators and the military on the streets of Manila—marked the resurrection of the communist discourse of revolution and the appearance of a newly reestablished, Maoist-inspired CPP (Lacaba 2003). This episode of intense state violence against ill-armed students was a boost for the young party (Nemenzo 1984, 68). A few years back, the CPP had been struggling to maintain cohesion after leading ideologue Jose Maria Sison and his comrades in the Kabataang Makabayan (KM, or Nationalist Youth) were expelled from the older pro-Soviet Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) in 1967.[6] The split resulted in KM's losing the bulk of its membership when its chapters in the slum communities and the rural areas opted to stay with the PKP. KM also experienced its own split, after Sison kicked out comrades who had charged him with authoritarianism and scheming to get his loyalists elected to the leadership. The latter formed the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK, Association of the Democratic Youth), and members presented themselves as "thinking radicals"—the opposite of the Maoist dogmatists of KM. The two groups eventually reconciled after SDK leaders joined the CPP, but the rivalry continued on the field.[7] Regardless, KM's numbers remained small when compared to those of Christian moderate, social democratic, and reactionary student groups in schools and national student federations (Manila 1981, 320–21; Ordonez 2003; Evangelista 2008).

Changing national and international contexts, however, began to favor the radicals. Filipino students were not immune to rage and admiration over the valor of the Vietnamese in fighting the Americans and the audacity of Chinese revolutionaries (Malay 1984, 45). Filipino nationalism, which was demonized during the cold war, was making a comeback thanks to growing student interest in the writings of politician Claro M. Recto and historian Teodoro Agoncillo, whose book *Revolt of the Masses* was described as the first propeople's account of the 1896 revolution against Spain (Agoncillo 1957). Moreover, young urban(ized) Filipinos became antiestablishment, imagining themselves as blending the countercultures of the West with the radicalism of the East as they rebelled against their conservative and pro-American parents (Abao and Victa-Labajo 1995). KM became one of their idolized groups, although they also were dedicated to marijuana and free love—the very habits that KM saw as representative of bourgeois decadence.[8]

Objective conditions were thus ripe for the CPP to tap a potential mass base in the schools with emboldened radicals' challenging moderates, winning student council elections and taking over reform movements, demanding greater student representation in school policymaking bodies (Astorga-Garcia 1970).[9] As the radicals increased their attacks, moderates began to unravel as many among their ranks were increasingly attracted to the writings of Sison, Mao Tse Tung, the writer Renato Constantino, and third world revolutionaries Paolo Freire and Che Guevara (Manila 1981, 308–10; dela Torre 1986, 88; Lacaba 2003, 12–13).

Yet all these groups were still a minority in schools teeming with politically apathetic students. What gave groups the high profile they were looking for to advance their propaganda movement were the media and anti-Marcos elites, who saw a chance to hit back at President Ferdinand Marcos after he "won" reelection as president in 1969.[10] Henceforth, anti-Marcos newspapers devoted large amounts of space to the radicals. When radicals and moderates agreed to a joint demonstration against Marcos during his January 1970 legislative speech to the nation, a decisive shift ensued, with the moderates' suddenly finding themselves less and less in control of the situation. Then the street battles began once KM and SDK had seized the leadership (Joaquin 1990, 334).

The FQS was a boon to the CPP, creating reverberations that translated into more KM and SDK chapters' being formed in schools and urban slum communities nationwide.[11] This fusion of student radicalization with party expansion is the reason why student activists then and

now have held up the FQS as a sacred event. It was both a break from the compromised politics of the PKP and moderate rivals, and the validation of the CPP's agenda. It attested to the power of students to educate, mobilize, and inspire, and it also showed how students can discard their petit-bourgeois trappings and be "one with the masses" (Constantino 1970). It was, in the words of someone who witnessed the event, "the defining moment[,] the turning point, the radical rapture" that turned student activists into revolutionaries, wholeheartedly committed to becoming underground cadres for the party or guerrillas of the nascent New People's Army (NPA). And for those who first entertained the idea that social change could happen incrementally by pressuring politicians and state leaders to reform, the FQS shattered their illusions.[12] Soon after, the moderate groups began to splinter as moderates readily joined the fold of their erstwhile militant rivals.

More mobilizations followed. In 1971, students took over the University of the Philippines (UP) main campus in Diliman, Quezon City. When police entered the campus and forcibly removed students, the Diliman Commune made heroes and martyrs of the communards (Werning and Sison 1989, 35). A daring raid by a young army captain of the armory of the Philippine Military Academy, followed by a failed but equally audacious attempt by young communists to smuggle arms from China, added to the aura of the party. The CPP had finally earned the right to call itself the new revolutionary vanguard. The 1971 bombing by a CPP special team of an anti-Marcos opposition party in a Manila plaza prompted Marcos to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. This played right into the hands of Sison, who now could warn that Marcos was becoming increasingly authoritarian. He urged activists to challenge this growing state fascism by openly advocating for a CPP-led "people's war."

Yet was this upping the ante gaining traction? KM's and SDK's nationwide expansion and spontaneous self-organizing by students appeared to validate this new tactic. As radical student activism spread, all involved were certain that for the system to survive, Marcos had to change the rules of the game. And an authoritarian turn was going to be a boon to the new party, as this would increase the number of recruits who would be ready to go to the countryside and factories to serve the people. Beneath the euphoria, however, were disturbing signs. The first pertained to the quality of these recruits. The fast increase in recruits prompted KM and SDK chapters to relax their burdensome security procedures and vetting processes, thereby opening organizations to military infiltration.[13]

Leaders also complained that the new recruits were contented with reciting Mao's *Little Red Book* and showed very little interest in more complex explanations of Marxist, Leninist, and even Stalinist philosophies.[14] This propensity for simplistic explanations worsened as students from the diploma mills and the slums joined the youth organizations. These lumpen members may have been some of the bravest street fighters, but they were also the ones who were the most difficult to educate on Maoist fundamentals and ethics. Their enthusiasm often bordered on ultra-leftism and, in more comical instances, even on the irreverent.

A former SDK activist remembered how worried group members were about the quality of activists when their organizing among the "basic sectors" (i.e., the poor) increased the number of lumpen members, which affected expansion because these new recruits "could not even draw the correct political line anymore" (Regalario 2008, 67). He reminisced:

> [As] the protest movement was surging forward, seemingly irrevocable and powerful [very] few activists were concerned about the possibility of massive fascist repressions as we were confident in our numbers and in our allies. More importantly . . . there was very little effort on the part of activists to refine our standpoint, deepen our grasp of reality already in a state of flux and reassess our experiences more comprehensively by elevating it into theory. [We preferred slogans] for the sake of popularization, for the function of merely capturing the swelling anger of an oppressed people, linking it up with protest in its organizational forms . . . [It] was questionable but popular belief among activists that the swelling protest movement attests to the correctness of our simple slogans.

Anti-intellectualism was complemented by a sectarianism that took seriously Mao's demand for an uncompromising struggle against reformists (read: moderates) and revisionist renegades (read: the PKP and other left-wing groups; Rutten 2008, 283–84).[15] One result of this sectarian surge was a stunning defeat of radicals in the 1971 UP student council elections—a year after the FQS—by a group of right-wing fraternities and student organizations describing themselves as representing responsible student activism and not beholden to any outside force (i.e., the CPP). This turn of events showed that while students may have sympathized with the demonstrations, they were still not completely convinced that Mao Tse Tung Thought was the right solution to university and national problems.[16] The radicals realized that they had to make more organizational adjustments to conform to the students' level of

consciousness. SDK cadres, for example, began joining moderate student organizations and then winning over their members (Candazo 2008, 84). SDK also ordered its activists who were working with the basic sectors to go back to schools in part to stop the spread of lumpen sentiments (Regalario 2008, 67). While KM remained fiercely militant in public, its top leaders were quietly devoting more attention to the ideological education of their members.

But as more young people joined the radicals and chapters of the KM and SDK, as new organizations grew by leaps and bounds, as the party opened new guerrilla zones, and as President Marcos continued to show no intention of stepping down after his second term ended, the CPP realized that there was little time for in-depth education on Marxism and revolution (Daroy 1984, 39). Besides, didn't the chairman himself declare, à la Stalin, that the vanguard did not really need that many Marxists (Chapman 1987, 69)? Then Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972, and the political landscape changed radically, to the initial disadvantage of the student radicals.

Reigniting the Storm

Under martial law, the military detained more than thirty thousand people, many of them students; banned subversive organizations; and drove activists to go underground, return to the provinces to cool off, or turn their backs on the revolution. Many of those who joined the NPA and set up the first urban underground were either killed or captured, and the network that Sison and his comrades thought was ready to absorb those fleeing the military fell apart overnight. Activists tried to regroup and fight back with lightning protests, political graffiti, and secret distribution of anti-Marcos broadsheets.[17] But these proved costly in terms of human and material resources, and student activists who were able to elude arrest and were not on the military's list of people to be apprehended had to explore other options that were low-key and modest in scale. An SDK cadre proposed availing of "legal struggle" as a way of rekindling the protesting spirit of students.[18] "Legal struggle," accordingly, would focus on demanding the return of students' rights such as less regulated campus newspapers and organizations (both severely limited under martial law), with the goal of setting up a network of legal organizations that could support the underground as well as the NPA.[19]

As in the past, UP took the lead in experimenting with legal struggle, and this became the local party branch's policy starting about late 1974. The UP experience immediately attracted the attention of the CPP's Manila–Rizal regional committee, which was itself trying to figure out how to go about developing an urban resistance against the dictatorship. The latter would order its units to "join the legal struggle, to form legal organizations of the masses—in order to guide them, be close to them without the enemy knowing, and provide a channel for revolutionary propaganda and illegal work."[20] Gradually, an assortment of academic, religious, fraternity, social service, and province-mates' associations emerged, engaging in authorized activities such as the promotion of students' rights and welfare and lobbying for the restoration of student councils and newspapers (Nemenzo 1984). Outside UP, union organizing also was being revived, as were self-help communities among the urban poor. Human rights solidarity groups also were being formed among the religious, with nuns, priests, and ministers becoming vocal in demanding that the dictatorship respect and follow constitutional procedures such as the law of habeas corpus.

Meanwhile, the pressure from these legal organizations was forcing school officials all over Manila to grant one concession after another. These small-scale victories attracted more students to the cause of student rights and welfare, expanding the organizations and giving the newly rejuvenated party's underground school network a chance to further test the authoritarian waters politically.[21] In December 1975, students, nuns, and priests joined a picket line with workers in a wine distillery plant striking over low wages and unfair management—the first ever strike under martial law (Franco 1997, 204). The ensuing arrests showed just how consolidated the legal organizations were; a second tier of student leaders promptly took over to lead the first open protest at UP demanding the release of their imprisoned comrades.[22] Security forces dispersed the protesters and arrested more students, but the mass action had broken the wall of fear at UP (Franco 1997, 207).[23] All this culminated in the first thousand-strong multisectoral lightning demonstration that blocked a major Manila thoroughfare.[24] This rally was broken up by the police and a regime-imposed news blackout limited the propaganda impact of the demonstration, but the Manila regional committee was satisfied with the results: the demonstrations showed that the underground was now showing signs of being able to survive the authoritarian order.

After that, activists became more daring, writing biting antiregime commentaries in the campus newspaper and participating in indoor human rights rallies sponsored by church-based human rights organizations.[25] Students also began to participate in the struggles of the urban poor communities, and they were very prominent in supporting protesting dockhands threatened by a government plan to replace them with a mechanized fish docking system in a port community north of Manila.[26] Then in the summer of 1977, the Marcos regime approved a Ministry of Education proposal for a general increase in tuition fees. In response, Manila students spontaneously boycotted their classes, and by the end of the second week of the first school semester, more than two hundred thousand students in metropolitan Manila had refused to attend classes.[27]

These uprisings surprised both the dictatorship and the CPP. The latter was initially not enthusiastic about the protests, believing that students were way past "economistic issues" at this stage. But as the boycotts spread and cadres based in the field clamored for guidance, the party leadership changed course and gave its full support.[28] The protests opened the floodgates for more new mass leaders, who—upon their recruitment into the party—were then assigned to forming a center that would coordinate the protests and bring them fully under party guidance. The result was the creation of Alyansa laban sa Pagtaas ng Tuition Fee (Alliance against Tuition Fee Increases, or Alyansa), a coalition of student organizations that provided able coordination to make the boycotts more spirited and better organized, eventually forcing Marcos to cancel the tuition fee increases.[29]

This reversal by Marcos was the first victory won by student activists under martial law. The CPP immediately interpreted it as yet another indicator that the students were now ready for a "higher level of struggle"—for instance, directly attacking the Marcos dictatorship.[30] Party cadres who supervised the students proposed to Alyansa leaders that they up the ante, and on the fifth anniversary of martial law, the coalition called on students to join a multisectoral rally protesting the anniversary of martial law.[31] This demonstration drew more than twenty thousand participants, who were—again—dispersed by the police.[32] The party interpreted this huge turnout of workers, urban poor, and students as further evidence that the urban resistance had reached a higher level; the next step was to consolidate these gains.

The party approved plans to set up a legal national student association that would replace the looser Alyansa and assume the role of the students'

vanguard in the pursuit of their rights and welfare. Those who had played key roles in the tuition struggle and then been recruited into the CPP were now formed into special teams whose responsibility was to organize the chapters of this proposed national student center in schools, where the boycotts were most prominent (Ecumenical Writing Group 1982, 127–28). Riding on the coattails of the protests, the teams had no problem recruiting student leaders and student organizations from twenty-four schools and universities in Manila. On September 11, 1977, the National League of Filipino Students (NLFS—later, the "N" was dropped) was formally established in a general meeting of these leaders. In its declaration of principles, its officers vowed to steer the organization "towards the promotion of our nationalist heritage, the growth of Filipino consciousness, the protection of our economic patrimony [and] the assertion of our democratic rights and civil liberties."[33] The LFS became the CPP's legal persona, acting as the entry point for cadres to then penetrate campus newspapers and national associations such as the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines, and to create school parties to run for student council elections. And the evidence appeared to show that LFS was gaining headway all over Manila as well as in selected provinces. By 1982, the party listed the following successes attributed to the LFS: "democratic gains (granting of student councils); de-facto recognition of LFS by the government; 100% increase in the UG [underground] membership; training of forces in mass actions & mobilizations; unity in orientation was achieved."[34]

But even as they were celebrating the growth of the party's presence in the schools, cadres and activists operating at the ground level were perplexed by a parallel countertrend: the steady decline of student participation in protest activities after Marcos revoked the tuition increases. Students were sympathetic, but they were also less enthusiastic about keeping the fire of protest alive. After having won their battle against university authorities, their attention seemed to go back to earning a diploma. No amount of radical propaganda—through campus newspapers and the student councils—could reverse, or even slow down, this contrary drift. It was as if objective conditions brought about by martial law had finally caught up with the surge in student protest, putting a break to the advance of what Marxists often refer to as "the subjective forces." And part of those conditions was the very trait of students that the CPP was most apprehensive about: their petit-bourgeois opportunism.

Because martial law's repressive atmosphere had limited the ability of activists to reach out to their constituents, students' political apathy and concern for preparing themselves as future professionals became more manifest. The silence in many campuses (the protests were happening mainly in Manila) enabled the regime to go full blast with its planned "commercialization of university education" (Valte 2007). Statistics appear to confirm this shift. Table 10.1 shows that shortly after martial law, enrollment in the time-consuming and apolitical natural sciences increased. And if one adds the medical sciences to this category, the rise was even higher. While the social sciences continued to attract students, enrollments between 1975 and 1990 constantly wavered. The humanities suffered the most, with huge swings between 1970 and 1975, 1980–82, and 1983–84; the last two sets of dates followed a year after dramatic surges in antistate protests.

The data may, of course, lead to different interpretations, but one definite correlation can be made between those who decided to enroll in courses with high returns and the attractiveness of student activism. The CPP worried about the political implications of this shift, and one former cadre admitted that martial law most likely encouraged more students

Table 10.1. Student Enrollment, Tertiary Education, by Field of Study, 1970–86

YEAR	TOTAL	EDUCATION	HUMANITIES	SOCIAL SCIENCES	NATURAL SCIENCES	MEDICAL SCIENCES	OTHERS
1970	584,171	108,309	123,193	236,775	64,612	31,345	19,937
1975	769,749	43,570	6,536	484,362	145,962	36,309	53,010
1980	1,276,016	92,585	9,612	482,993	503,829	123,367	63,630
1981	1,335,889	109,524	9,982	514,453	506,516	125,971	69,443
1982	1,411,515	142,378	3,144	463,640	596,596	112,993	92,764
1983	1,576,500	164,466	10,885	587,383	624,476	126,842	62,448
1984	98,933	139,924	5,506	447,346	340,833	55,722	0
1986	1,115,832	158,374	164,950	381,518	274,163	136,827	0
1987	1,204,000	170,888	11,418	442,794	330,349	147,638	100,913
1988	1,579,938	185,649	193,358	447,223	593,317	160,391	0
1989	1,225,315	220,755	180,400	374,876	288,058	160,320	906
1990	1,349,639	257,638	192,024	487,186	278,763	272,784	61,244
1991	1,656,815	302,485	145,197	428,535	437,920	317,510	25,168

Source: http://www.uis.unesco.org/pagesen/DBEnrolTerField.asp (accessed August 9, 2009)

to pursue courses in the sciences and technology that made them more marketable after graduation. He acknowledged that the science courses' "heavier academic discipline" meant students would have "less time for activism" (Abao and Victa-Labajo 1995, 7). Centers of activism such as UP were not immune. One observer noted that the calm that martial law brought to the campus opened UP to "more students from the upper-middle class . . . changing altogether the pro-people progressive climate [UP] once provided for students" and making inevitable "the saddening phenomenon of 'bourgeoisification.'"[35]

Then there were the generational shifts. Students who entered college during martial law were distinguished from their elders by their progressive dissociation from the events of the early 1970s. Each incoming freshman class knew less and less about events such as the FQS, and what little they learned about the protests of the premartial law era was mainly coming from the romanticized version that activists peddled through campus newspapers and the occasional small lectures. These "martial law babies'" sole baptism of fire was the 1977 antituition hike struggle, a protest activity that drew huge numbers mainly because their pockets (or rather, their parents' pockets) were hurt. It was economic self-interest that prevailed—a sentiment that Leninist organizations such as the CPP derisively referred to as "trade union consciousness."

Their growing distance from the radical tradition also would reflect on their own leaders. Compared to the FQS generation's ideological shortcomings, the martial law activists were in a far worse predicament. As their elders graduated, moved on to the countryside or the urban underground, or were killed or detained, the younger successors took over with the same enthusiasm and selfless commitment. But they lacked the ideological depth that the old generation possessed. For unlike the latter, martial law student leaders had limited access to resources that could have answered their needs for ideological and political deepening. The dictatorship coerced libraries to disallow student access to radical literature, while topics like Marxism and/or revolution were excised from social science and humanities syllabi. It was difficult and rare to possess copies of Marx's and Engel's *Communist Manifesto*, let alone *Das Kapital* and Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* and *Imperialism: The Highest State of Capitalism*. Thus, the LFS's national stature was built on very fragile ideological grounds.

The party's Propaganda and Education Department sought to compensate for this weakness by publishing manuals such as the *Basic Party Course*, an introductory educational guide based on Sison's *Philippine*

Society and Revolution, but its circulation and translation were limited for obvious reasons.[36] The Davao City "white area" committee complained in an unpublished manuscript, "A hundred mass actions will not be able to provide the masses with what mass education can: a comprehensive understanding of the people's democratic revolution. Mass education, together with propaganda and solid organizing, should therefore complement mass mobilizations. To be really systematic with our mass education, we should come up with, and follow, a formal curriculum for every important sector, incorporating the general mass course and the special mass course."[37]

Eventually party units found a solution by reprinting simplified moral exhortations of Mao's *Red Book* and in Sison's formulaic descriptions of the Philippine political economy. Militancy became a question of moral commitment and righteous anger, while ideological depth became the least important criterion for being a good communist. The perennial state of war against the state likewise became an excuse to devote less time to political education and ideological discussions. Activists were ordered to focus on their organizational assignments, leading to complaints that they had turned into "task-oriented bastards" (TOBs) who implemented party policy unquestioningly and followed the edicts of their political officers to the letter.[38] This feeling of being used eventually took its toll on the rank and file. Smarter and more critical cadres began questioning the soundness of the CPP's strategy, attacking its tactics as being too dogmatic, even making fun of the dogmatism of their political officers (the "dark lords") and referring to policies as "orders from above" (Abao and Victa-Labajo 1995, 7).[39] These tensions from below would be aggravated when regional bodies began to challenge the national leadership over questions of strategy and tactics.

Tactical Clashes and the Problem with Success

When the CPP abandoned its attempt to replicate Mao's Yenan fortress and decentralized its operations, the result was its unprecedented national expansion as regional units were allowed considerable leeway to experiment and improvise based on their reading of their local settings. This policy of "centralized leadership, decentralized operations," however, also sowed the seeds of multiple deviations when regional organizations began believing that their local strategies were more appropriate approaches to revolutionary expansion than the Mao-inspired

one foisted on them by the party chairman, Jose Marie Sison. As these regions grew, they also began to challenge the national leadership to abandon the orthodoxy. The most controversial was the conflict between the Manila regional committee and the Central Committee in the late 1970s, when the latter charged the regional body with compromising the party's role as revolutionary spirit after it formed an electoral coalition with social democrats, liberal democrats, bourgeois reformists, and anti-Marcos reactionaries (Abinales 2001, 136–41). The Manila cadres believed that the coalition could win in dictatorship-sponsored "demonstration elections," and defied the Central Committee order to withdraw from contestation (Caouette 2004, 232–36). Citing the 1905 Russian Revolution as historical precedent, they argued that forming such broad coalitions could lead to unrelenting pressure on the regime through a series of *bugso* (storms) that would eventually create "democratic spaces" that the CPP could then exploit to its advantage (Calizo 2008).[40]

The party leadership accused the Manila comrades of peddling a "reformist illusion" and of deviating from the revolution's main priority: the creation of a rural guerrilla army and urban underground network. It reiterated the principal role of cities in the struggle: to support the NPA with personnel and material, and to use protests and mobilizations (the *bugso*) to help ease military pressures on the guerrillas by forcing the enemy to shift its attention back to the cities. The Manila regional committee stuck to its guns and engaged the Central Committee in an intense debate, replete with quotations from Lenin. Its intransigence left the Central Committee no choice but to purge its leaders and replace them with its own loyalists.

The debate had a profound effect on martial law student activism. Under Sison's original formula of the early 1960s, students were recruited and mobilized for eventual assignment to the countryside and the factories where they would take charge of the political education of the masses while shedding their petit-bourgeois baggage and becoming real proletarians. The Manila cadres did not openly challenge this view, but they also insisted that the urban surges be given equal consideration. And for the *bugso* to succeed, it must be able to bring together a broad spectrum of urban social forces that would support the mobilization of workers and the urban poor. Within the student sector, this meant devoting equal time and attention to organizing the petit bourgeois itself—from blue-collar workers in the public and private sectors, to nonfactory workers (e.g., the transport sector), to academe—not for the countryside and the

underground but principally for the struggle to expand a democratic space. In this scenario students had to mobilize students knowing fully that the majority would aspire to be professionals. In the quest for *bugso*, the goal was to turn students into white-collar workers who also would believe in the revolution: a radical middle class, as it were.[41]

To the Central Committee, the prospect of having a whole slew of student activists operating with no links to and unfamiliar with the lives of the masses was like nurturing a reactionary virus inside a proletarian organization. The party therefore had to deal with this localist deviation harshly, lest it lose control of its largest and most important regional body; hence the swiftness of the purge in 1977. A reconstituted Manila leadership then launched a series of education sessions to critique the deviation, while formally reestablishing the KM as the official *and only* representative of youth and students to the party's united front body, the National Democratic Front (NDF).[42] While the CPP propagandists gave no exact number, it would be safe to assume that the KM probably paralleled the size of the LFS, which declared in 1982 that it was discarding its reformist image and henceforth would be "a national democratic mass organization committed to advance the national democratic aspirations of the people."[43]

Still, one other factor complicated martial law student activism: the success of the revolution itself. As the CPP grew, its reliance on students as a source of cadres for the countryside and the urban underground diminished. The party was now in a position to nurture organic intellectuals from the more politically reliable basic masses. With more worker and peasant cadres assuming senior and middle-level positions in the organizations, their petit-bourgeois comrades were becoming less vital in the expansion of guerrilla zones or urban networks (Rutten 2008, 312–13). The party's confidence in its proletarian and peasant constituents reached a high point when, in the early 1980s, it set up two legal mass organizations for them: the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, May First Movement) and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines) (Caouette 2004, 286–87 for KMU; 371 for KMP). From that time on, party mobilizations were to be led by the KMU and the KMP. The LFS continued to represent the voice of the student youth, but it was gradually upstaged by the Kabataan para sa Demokrasya at Nasyonalismo (Youth for Democracy and Nationalism, KADENA), a coalition of different small groups set up by urban poor youths and students.[44] KADENA grew rapidly thanks to the temper of the times, and it did not take long before the CPP's National Youth and Students Department concentrated its best

cadres on providing guidance to the group. KADENA's remarkable organizational skills, not to mention the seriousness with which it approached Marxist political education, enabled it to assert some autonomy from the party. On the eve of the fall of Marcos, KADENA cadres were outshining their LFS counterparts in many an urban protest.[45]

All this was happening at a time when the party had decided it was time for a nationally coordinated push toward a strategic stalemate against the state. Urban uprisings backed by the selective violence of armed city partisans were being given the same priority as NPA military offensives. These *welgang bayan* (people's strikes) also were viewed as dress rehearsals of the final confrontation that lay ahead, when the tide would turn to the revolution's favor. In these critical conjunctures, the CPP would rely on the tough industrial working class and the urban poor, supported by, but not dependent on, the petit bourgeoisie. For after realizing that raising the level of the 1977 protests from antituition strikes to open defiance of the dictatorship did not work, the CPP leadership decided to scale back on its plans and ordered its cadres to go back to the issues that first led students to protest. In the beginning of the 1980s, therefore, the party's Youth and Students Bureau launched a series of Democratic Youth Movements (DYMs), described as "a well-defined orientation for 'Step-by-Step Organizing among the Ranks of the Student-Youth'" (Caouette 2004, 292). LFS chapters were converted into DYM cells, whose functions were to reinvigorate student interest in bread-and-butter issues (tuition increases, improvement of school facilities, seeking student representation in the highest policy-making councils of universities, and keeping campus newspapers free from administrative interference by school authorities and the military).

Unfortunately, before the DYM could take off, the course of national politics changed dramatically. On August 23, 1983, Marcos's top political opponent, Benigno Aquino Jr., was assassinated while disembarking from the airplane in which he had returned from exile. Aquino's death triggered massive spontaneous protests against the Marcos dictatorship. The burst of protests from hitherto unorganized groups, including political forces that were not influenced by or were even against the Left, forced the CPP to abandon the DYM project and hurry back to the anti-fascist front. This time, however, it was returning to an arena that had, since 1983, become an overcrowded field. The party now had to compete with newly politicized forces as well as with their old and reactionary rivals of yore, all of whom had found inspiration and membership in

the crowds that went out on the street to protest Aquino's killing. A few years later, the party's fortunes took a turn for the worse when it ordered its forces to boycott a critical election in which an ailing Marcos staked his dictatorship against a coalition of forces that came together to support the presidency of Aquino's widow, Corazon. That election in 1986 became the prologue to a peaceful, popular uprising that ended Marcos's fifteen-year reign and installed Aquino as the president of a postauthoritarian order while the CPP watched from the sidelines.

Conclusion: The Student Sideshow

The CPP's abdication of its leadership of the anti-Marcos opposition in 1986 led to fierce debates among its leaders, adding to the organization's woes and ultimately sparking its first major split in 1992.[46] These internal problems deeply affected organizing in the different sectors. The LFS virtually disappeared during these periods, as it was itself swallowed by the factional strife.[47] It resurfaced again only in 1994, after student leaders who supported Jose Maria Sison's reaffirmation of the CPP's Maoist fundamentals recovered control of the organization and, "'[a]rmed with the lessons of the past,' [vowed to] fight the offensives of imperialism, the reactionary government and other counterrevolutionary elements," inspired by an "unwavering commitment to advance the national democratic aspirations of the Filipino people."[48]

But the LFS was clearly past its prime. Its presence in campuses was pitiful, and it could not even muster more than a hundred student members at its birthplace, the UP. In other schools, rival Left groups and moderate challengers constantly threatened the LFS's hold on student power. By the second half of the 1990s, the LFS was upstaged by a new party favorite: the urban youth group Anak ng Bayan was designated by the CPP leadership as the youth representative in its party-list coalition that now represents the small leftist presence in the lower house of the Philippine Congress.[49] In the broader national scene, student protests were becoming mere sideshows, loud in their chants but pathetically miniscule in their numbers. Their leaders continued to deify the FQS and the 1977 tuition struggles, but were not able to rouse the public. And the revolution now had more important concerns: reconsolidating guerrilla bases, taking back control over a fragmented labor and peasant movement, and surviving constant harassment from the state. The universities were not its main concern anymore.

Notes

1. Today's radicals refer to themselves as twenty-first century heirs of the 1896 youth-led nationalist revolution against Spain.
2. Just how valuable a base for recruitment are the schools? Consider more recent available statistics: from 1999 to 2005, student enrollment in colleges and universities nationwide averaged 2,134,323 annually, and 26.41 percent of this total is the average enrollment in Metropolitan Manila. See Republic of the Philippines, Commission on Higher Education, http://www.ched.gov.ph/statistics/index.html (accessed October 29, 2010).
3. See the chapter on South Korea. A reviewer noted that many well-known South Korean politicians began their careers as would-be proletarians, some even marrying working-class women and women labor activists.
4. After all, campus issues were examples of trade union consciousness that Leninists abhor.
5. A. R. Magno, "The Activist in History," *Sinag: Official Student Newspaper of the University of the Philippines College of Arts and Sciences*, Nobyembre (November) 1981.
6. KM was founded by Sison as part of the PKP's reorganization plans.
7. Sison was accused of "commandism, violation of democracy, [and] use of lies to manipulate members." See Valencia 2008. The Communist Party of the Philippines today has, of course, removed this connection with the old party and the KM-SDK split. See the interview with CPP chairman Jose Ma Sison on the Kabataang Makabayan at the following web link: http://www.defendsison.be/pages_php/0412041.php.
8. See the wonderful description of the youth in the 1960s by Joaquin (1990, 329).
9. The CPP also struck luck in the countryside when a young commander of the PKP's military arm, the Huks, joined hands with Sison. Bernabe "Kumander Dante" Buscayno's guerrillas became the first unit of the New People's Army (NPA).
10. Marcos's victory came through massive fraud and intimidation. He also bankrupted the national treasury to ensure his win.
11. SDK grew from eleven chapters to more than forty-seven chapters in metropolitan Manila alone. See Regalario 2008, 67.
12. Satur C. Ocampo, "Living the Spirit of the First Quarter Storm" (Remarks at the opening of the mobile photo exhibit "Never Again!," sponsored by the September 21 Committee, at the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communications Lobby, Diliman, January 25, 2000, http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/Lobby/4677/so-s21.htm [accessed April 15, 2009]).
13. On KM infiltration, see Armando J. Malay, "Diary of a Decrepit Dean," *University of the Philippines (Diliman),* 13 (January 1972).
14. There were even bizarre episodes of leaders' imagining themselves as the Filipino Mao. One magazine reported an incident where "some SDK personalities bolted the organization as an expression of their dissatisfaction with the way the leadership was running the organization. One of them remarked that a certain leader developed an arrogance to the extent of *considering himself as a leader in the stature of Mao Tse*

Tung. The other conflict resulted in the repudiation by their mass membership for their arrogance, wrong style of work and for some ideological inconsistencies." *The Sunday Times Magazine,* February 22, 1970, 4 (emphasis added).

15. See, for example, the refusal of KM activists in Negros to start their immersion among sugar workers because the organizations that came ahead were "clerico fascists."
16. As one former SDK cadre curtly described it: "Masaker sa eleksyon ang nangyari" [The election was a wholesale massacre]. See Candazo 2008, 84.
17. *The Philippine Collegian*, February 1, 1973.
18. "An Overview of the Student Christian Movement of the Philippines," *Handbook on the Student Christian Movement—Philippines* (Manila: Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, 1978), 12.
19. "Hinggil sa Legal na Pakikibaka" [On Legal Struggle], unpublished, circa 1974. The SDK cadre was Antonio "TonyHil" Hilario, who was later killed as an NPA guerrilla.
20. Komiteng Tagapagpaganap-Manila Rizal, "Ang Ating Taktikal na Islogan para sa Kasalukuyang Yugto ng Rebolusyon," Agosto 1975: 7; Mindanao Commission, "Ang Ating Walong Taong Pakikibaka," n.d.
21. "The History of the Sandigan para sa Mag-aaral at Sambayanan," mimeographed, *Philippine Radical Papers*, Box 16/09.05, Reel 08, 1.
22. *Philippine Daily Express*, January 6, 1976.
23. See also "Workers Strike Movement Surges Anew in Metro Manila," *Ang Bayan*, September 15, 1977.
24. "Revolutionary Mass Movement Developing Rapidly in Manila-Rizal," *Ang Bayan*, December 21, 1976.
25. University of the Philippines (Diliman) Committee on Student Affairs, "A Clarification on What Really Happened on January 23, 1976," mimeographed, *Philippine Radical Papers*, Box 17/46.01, Reel 9, 3.
26. "Alyansa ng Maynila at Karatig-Pook laban sa Demolisyon at Presidential Decree 814," mimeographed, 1976; and Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Batilyo Cargo Handling Services, Inc., and Samahang Pangnayon, "The Batilyo Issue," mimeographed, *Philippine Radical Papers*, Box 01/13.01, Reel 2 and Box 15/34.01, Reel 08, respectively.
27. "Resurgent Student Movement Sweeps Colleges, Universities," *Ang Bayan*, July 15, 1977; "200,000 Students in 10 Schools Rally to Resurgent Protest Movement," *Ang Bayan*, July 31, 1977.
28. *Rebel Collegian*, 1973.
29. "Militant Student Protest Movement Forces Marcos to Take a Step Backward," *Ang Bayan*, August 15, 1977.
30. University Alliance, "The Significance of the Boycotts and Marches," mimeographed, 1977, *Philippine Radical Papers*, Box 17/35.03, Reel 09.
31. "Take a Giant Step towards Freedom!" and "Pahayag para sa Kalayaan, Katarungan at Dignidad ng Tao," *Philippine Radical Papers*, Box 11/01.08, Reel 07 and Box 11/05.09, Reel 06, respectively.
32. "Students, Teachers Boycott Classes to Assert Their Democratic Rights," *Ang Bayan*, January 31, 1979.

33. National League of Filipino Students, "Declaration of Principles," mimeographed, 1977.
34. Communist Party of the Philippines. "Characteristics of the Student Youth (YS)," as quoted in Caouette 2004, 291.
35. Demegillo, "History and Causes of the Student Movement, 1958–1972," mimeographed, 1974(?): 2.
36. "Party Situation and Policies in the Mindanao Region (1977–1980)" (unpublished document, 21).
37. "Summing Up of White Area Work in Davao City (March 1979–June 1980)" (unpublished manuscript, circa 1980).
38. This was a term that became quite popular during my time as a student.
39. The phrase "dark lord" was inspired by the novel *The Lord of the Rings*.
40. Manuel S. Calizo, "Mula SBK tungong SDK, Quiapo hanggang Aklan," in *Valencia 2008*, 89.
41. The phrase was coined by the late UP student leader Lean Alejandro. Alejandro became the CPP's most prominent young leader in the 1980s. But he also became the public face of the party's decision to boycott the February 1986 presidential elections that became the catalyst of the People Power Revolution that ousted President Marcos. Alejandro was assassinated a year later, most likely by militarists who wanted to destabilize the new regime of President Corazon Aquino.
42. Nestor T. Castro, "Ang Muling Pagtatag sa Kabataang Makabayan" (unpublished manuscript, n.d). Castro was KM national chairman in 1984.
43. "What Is the LFS?," http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Field/4927/lfs/whatis.htm (accessed July 11, 2009). Former SDK activists protested the decision and suggested that the party also revive their organization, but democratic centralism prevailed. Soliman Santos, "SDK Revisited 2," in Valencia 2008 *Militant but Groovy*, 17.
44. Nothing has been written yet about KADENA.
45. Joven Peleador, KM secretary-general in the 1980s, in an interview with the author, July 20, 2009.
46. "Party Conducts Assessment Says Boycott Policy Was Wrong," *Ang Bayan* 18, no. 3 (May 1986): 1–3.
47. KM was taken over by the Sison group, expelling those who disagreed with the great leader. One anti-Sison group eventually revived the SDK.
48. "What Is the LFS?," http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Field/4927/lfs/whatis.htm (accessed July 11, 2009).
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CONCLUSION

Trends and Patterns in Student Activism in Asia

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The overarching story of student protest that emerges out of the ten accounts in this book is one of impermanence and inconstancy. Students in Asia have led dramatic moments of revolutionary upsurge, shaking regimes and sometimes bringing them down. But these peaks have punctuated long periods of low-level activism. Students emerge from time to time as a leading force in their nation's politics, and even on the global stage, but more frequently they lapse into political passivity and marginality, or direct their gaze no further than the campus gates. And the peaks and troughs of activism in the countries studied rarely coincide: for some cases in this volume, the 1960s and early 1970s was the key period of student protest, but others saw surges before or after that. Overall, the last several decades have brought a general decline in the power and influence of student protest in most countries, in keeping with wider global trends. But this decline, too, has been far from even. It has been punctured by dramatic upsurges, such as when students led regime-changing movements in South Korea in the 1980s, or in Indonesia in 1998.

This volume has argued that four separate frameworks account for the peaks, troughs, and cross-cutting influences that characterize student protest in Asia:

- The ways in which education systems have expanded and evolved, altering the campus and social context in which students study and protest;
- How ideas about student collective identity have changed over time, with the notion of the student at times being invested with highly charged ideas about political duty and influence, and at other times lapsing into irrelevance;

- How governing regimes have changed, forming a moving target for student activists and using different policies and techniques to control their collective action; and finally,
- When and how student activists have drawn inspiration and borrowed models from fellow students in other Asian countries and further afield, allowing us to detect traces of international diffusion amid the specificities that distinguish any given story of student activism.

In each of the country studies presented in this book, the authors have tried not simply to chronicle the particular national stories of student activism, but also to relate them to these four overarching stories about the context and structures that shape student activism. Having presented these detailed country pictures, this final chapter will weave them together and draw conclusions about the effects of and interrelationships among the four "stories" that shape student protest.

The Education System Story

Higher education has expanded dramatically throughout Asia during the last half century. Responding to both demands of markets and directives of governments, universities have proliferated, soaking up ever larger shares of most countries' youths. In most of the cases covered here, the authors have observed the same general tendency: as being a university student ceases to be a privilege and becomes a mass experience, students experience subtle changes both in the way they view themselves and in how they are viewed by others. These changes produce a paradoxical waning of students' political role: as university students attain the numerical weight to constitute a significant social group in their own right, their political role declines.

China presents a prototypical example in this regard. China's story is of a small and elite education system during the early years of the twentieth century, and then again in the early post-Mao period, training a core of students who believed themselves destined to join the country's governing elite and in turn developed a strong sense of collective identity as students, coupled with a shared belief that they had a special obligation to serve broader social interests. As a result, students played a leading role in political protest. In the post-1989 period, by contrast, a truly mass higher education system developed at a time of rapid economic growth and dramatic expansion of the private economy, such that

eventually roughly one-fourth of the relevant age cohort was enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions. Students began to see university less as a path to government service and its attendant social obligations, and more as a means of securing individual advancement. The student experience was simultaneously massified *and* individuated, leading to a decline in student collective identity and activism.

Education system stories across the region reveal remarkable commonalities. Early, exclusive systems catering to a small proportion of a country's elite, especially ones with some scope for entry on merit by middle-class children, tended to generate student activism marked by a strong sense of what might be termed *étudiant oblige*: the belief that students have an obligation to lead and guide their country and speak out on behalf of the powerless. Such a consciousness can coexist comfortably with established power structures for long periods (at Thailand's Chulalongkorn, the University of the Philippines, the University of Indonesia, etc.), though it also can provide a starting point for later radicalization.

As we also expected, however, the disruptive effects of the early stages of massification often contributed to student unrest. In Thailand, the emergence of a radical student movement in the 1960s, building up to the point in the early 1970s when students became one of the major forces in Thai politics, took place against the background of a process of disruptive massification of the education sector. The student population increased almost tenfold between 1960 and 1970, while the number of universities more than tripled, drawing in students from beyond the narrow elite that had previously dominated campuses and providing fertile ground for radicalization. Changes in the overall student profile have been particularly important to the course of student activism in Taiwan, too, particularly an influx first of mainlander students and professors, then of Taiwanese—which shifted political alignments on campus. Similarly in Malaysia, while undergraduates were a highly select elite through the nationalist era and early postindependence years, the late 1960s brought the first stages of a soon-dramatic demographic shift and expansion in higher education. In its initial stages, this expansion brought new life to student activism, particularly since most of the new influx represented previously underrepresented ethnic and class categories, at a time when the concerns of their communities were politically incendiary. Yet by the mid-1990s, the quantity of students skyrocketed; the quality of their education, as well as career opportunities after graduation, failed to keep pace. As a result, especially coupled with a broader regime agenda

of depoliticization, students became ever more focused on just getting through and both less prone to mobilize and less respected for doing so. Massification eventually wrought its deadening effects.

But the education story is a complex one, with many nuances and exceptions. For example, even in contexts of elitist higher education systems, it was often the islands of relative egalitarianism that produced the most radical activism. A prototypical example here is Thammasat University in Bangkok, the second oldest university in Thailand. Despite its status as an elite institution, Thammasat had a civic orientation and an open entrance system, and consequently it drew students from a range of social backgrounds. These factors, plus its location in the strategic heart of Bangkok and its academic concentration on social sciences and humanities, placed it at the cutting edge of student radicalism. Thammasat also contrasted dramatically with Chulalongkorn, the nation's oldest university, which catered to a narrower band of the nation's social elite, prepared its students for senior government positions, and was much less affected by student activism. A similar dichotomy is visible in the Philippines, where the flagship public University of the Philippines, which had been established in 1908, became the driving force of radical activism because of a pervasive leftist–progressive, as well as secular, character. Students at the nearby elite, private university, Ateneo de Manila, were much more politically conservative, in line with the Jesuit orientation of the campus. Likewise, in Indonesia, the elite institutions of the University of Indonesia and the Bandung Institute of Technology were central to promilitary, antileftist protests of the 1960s and to the successor movements of the 1970s, but the revival of leftist ideas in the late 1980s was to a large degree a phenomenon of newer, smaller, regional universities.

And seen differently, having to surmount a high bar to matriculate may fundamentally shape students' orientation once on campus. In Japan, for example, the structure of post–World War II universities—their distribution across Japan, their emphasis more on competitive entrance exams than a rigorous curriculum once enrolled, and their ample resources (including censorship-free publications)—was critical to the development and maintenance of student associational life. Higher education has grown in Japan from the stratum of a very small intellectual elite prewar to a truly mass commodity now, coinciding with a sharp decline in the time and attention students devote to political engagement.

Burma is an outlier. Perhaps most important to the education system story in Burma—and unique to the region—is the amount of time

the universities have been shut altogether under military rule: closed for a total of seven years between 1988 and 2000 and open for ever more abbreviated academic terms to preclude extensive mingling. Students, too, have been dispersed among ever farther-flung new universities and split up among existing universities, or they have been funneled into distance-learning programs. Moreover, universities lack academic freedom; surveillance and control are strict.

The region also includes dramatic exceptions to the general trend of massification's having dampening effects on student mobilization. South Korea, in particular, and Indonesia, to a lesser extent, are examples where students in mass education systems still played vanguard roles in antiregime protests. In Korea, the growth and massification of the higher education system was achieved relatively early, as part of the growth of a powerhouse developmentalist state committed to rapid economic growth. A mass-based higher education system was consolidating by the late 1970s and early 1980s. Although the sector still had a small number of elite private universities at its core, the sector as a whole consisted largely of private institutions, catering to a large proportion of relevant age cohorts. However, this transformation of the higher education system did not have the activism-dampening effects seen elsewhere; on the contrary, both the intensity and the radicalism of South Korean student activism peaked precisely as a mass-scale higher education sector took root. The significant effect of this large-scale growth of the sector was to provide an even greater number of recruits to join militant antigovernment mobilization. Indonesia, too, saw a dramatic increase in numbers of universities and students in the 1970s and 1980s, spurred both by the developmentalist regime and by the growing private economy, yet the ideal of a cohesive student movement's being a moral conscience of the nation lived on in students' collective memory, to be reignited in the wave of nationwide student protests that ended the Soeharto regime in 1998. These outcomes can be explained by reference to the persistence of authoritarian regimes in both countries beyond the period that massification took hold and the resulting perpetuation, or even ossification, of ideologies of student resistance, in a militant leftist form in South Korea and a moral politics version in Indonesia.

Yet both South Korea and Indonesia were exceptions that proved the rule: once students achieved their goals of ending authoritarianism, in both cases, both student protest and the heavy meaning invested in the

identity category of *student* have tended to decline—as detailed later in this chapter. In South Korea, students now are increasingly divided in a "free market" of civil society groups and alternative political interests; in Indonesia, the élan of the term *mahasiswa* appears to be fading fast. This pattern has been repeated across this region. Even in places like in Thailand and Hong Kong, which have experienced major prodemocracy mobilizations since the growth of mass education systems (in 1992 and 2003–4, respectively), students have often participated in these protests in large numbers, but simply alongside other social groups and the undifferentiated mass of the citizenry; few have mobilized specifically as students, let alone with broader pretensions that their student status conferred on them a responsibility to represent the views of the nation or to pioneer social and political change. Overall, these country studies confirm a general pattern: the expansion of higher education tends to reduce the elite status and symbolic meaning of students, impeding student activism. This brings us to our second framework—that of collective identity.

The Collective Identity Story

In tracing a story about *collective identity*, this volume has looked at whether students have defined themselves primarily as students or as part of a larger society or group, and the effects this has had both on their political activity and on the impacts of that activity. The contrast between the Philippines and Indonesia in the late 1960s and early 1970s offers a useful point of entry, by highlighting the divergent effects of these very different patterns. Student activism in the Philippines cannot be understood without reference to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP): students were part of CPP-led surges, even if they appeared to mobilize as students (or at least, youth) and however much the party doubted their loyalty. To persuade the party of their commitment, students would need to discard that status and join the masses. Mobilizing truly qua students, then, has been less likely—and indeed has been less common—in the Philippines than in our other cases.

In contrast, in Indonesia the category *mahasiswa* (university student) came to be heavily invested with political meaning from the time of the 1965–66 student movement against the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia [PKI]) and President Sukarno. This movement was important in the creation myth of the subsequent military-based New Order regime; accordingly, over the following decade or so, students

acquired a limited license to protest against the government that was not accorded to other groups. They did so by stressing what they saw as students' uniquely moral and pure political motivations and goals. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, some more radical students challenged the notion that students should guard themselves against pollution by outside interests and instead advocated that students ally with other groups, such as workers. Yet the notion that students were important political actors with a moral duty to save the country in times of crisis remained important to student identity until the end of the New Order, and it was an important triggering factor in the anti-Soeharto protests of 1998.

Clearly, then, students' propensity to view themselves as important actors in their own right or to try to merge with other social forces is partly a matter of ideological tenor and origin: in Indonesia, the cult of the morally pure university student arose among right-wing activists who had allied with the military against the Left and who were, initially at least, hostile to mass mobilization; in the Philippines, it was the communists who became the hegemonic oppositional force on campus, leaving an indelible mark on how students subsequently viewed themselves and organized.

However, it would be wrong to conclude from this contrast that leftism was incompatible with student vanguardism. In most of the countries profiled, even leftist phases of activism involved a fusion of belief in the special place, role, and duty of students with a commitment to egalitarianism and mobilization of the poor. Thus in Japan during the critical postwar period, when students were most active and most ideological, they organized first with support of the Japan Communist Party and then broadly in alliance with the New Left (of which the students were a key component), and now organize in connection with segments of what Steinhoff describes as an "invisible civil society." Even so, students early on theorized themselves as a separate subclass; their organizations were specific to students and reasonably autonomous (particularly at the subnational level), and at least some of the issues on which they engaged and the tactics they deployed were specific to students. Moreover, the well-resourced institutionalization and dispersal of student organizations left students uniquely well positioned to mobilize for protests around the 1970 revisions to the U.S.–Japan Joint Security Treaty, even after a period of relative decline. As such, even when not acting independently of other forces, students did develop and display a strong sense of collective identity *as students*.

Malaysia offers a different spin on that pattern. There, students organized in their heydays primarily *as students*: they articulated and absorbed rhetoric of students' special role in and responsibility toward a new nation, and they engaged in activism on their own volition, on campus and off. Since then, however, not only has activism remained more subdued than in the 1960s–70s, but also as their cohort has widened and deepened, students have tended toward a more functional understanding of that category, increasingly mobilizing, if at all, at least substantially under the rubric of other identities.

Thailand and Korea followed yet another, but also common, pattern: a leftist orientation toward popular alliance and mobilization *grew out* of earlier notions of students' special role. In Thailand, against the background of a small but rapidly expanding education system in the 1960s, a network of student activists and thinkers invested a new meaning in the category of student. They focused on a concept of social debt, presuming students to have a special responsibility to resolve social problems and defend the poor and underprivileged, in rejection of the military regime's attempt to impose a narrowly technocratic vision of the students' role in development. This notion fused with both New Left ideas and Thai radical traditions that were being discussed by students in informal groups and literature, strongly influencing the developing student radicalism of the early 1960s. South Korea followed a very similar trajectory. Students developed a strongly nationalist-inflected sense of social and moral obligation, as a result of the legacy of anti-Japanese mobilizations of students in the colonial period early in the twentieth century, as well as the April 1960 uprising, and also because of a strong emphasis on service derived from Korean Confucian traditions. However, a strong leftward orientation over subsequent decades, beginning in the 1970s and accelerating in the 1980s, meant that students also had a strong commitment to collaborating with—and organizing—industrial workers. The large number of militant students who went to work in factories and live in working-class districts played a major role in the foundation and development of the Korean trade union movement.

These two cases point toward another feature that can determine whether students choose to limit their activism to their own ranks or reach out to other social layers: the effects of repression. China and Taiwan (as well as Indonesia) provide illustrative examples. In China, the salience of student identity to the political actions of students has fluctuated wildly during the last hundred years, ranging from the Cultural

Revolution period when universities were closed and intellectual status was disparaged, to the early post-Mao period when, peaking during the Tiananmen demonstrations, students stressed their moral obligation to act and eschewed alliances with other groups. Students' extreme caution and their reluctance to forge alliances beyond the campus were in large part to preempt and avoid repression in conditions perceived as laden with great risk. In Taiwan, the fact that students have been most prone to organize around campus-level concerns—and *do* take on the Kuomintang (KMT) at that level—reflects a strong sense of their identification primarily as students and of their claiming a degree of agency in that role. Moreover, even when their mobilization has been only in support of broader political activism, Taiwanese students have emphasized their independence of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and other forces, for purposes both of legitimacy and relative safety, given pervasive surveillance and the likelihood of punishment otherwise.

Yet we cannot make too much of this observation because, as detailed further later on, the effect of repression is far from uniform, and the same result may occur *without* repression. For instance, the collective identity story in Hong Kong reflects a similar degree of pessimism as those of China or Taiwan, but more due to different priorities (students' preoccupation with relations with China) than to repression. In Hong Kong, as in Taiwan, only at brief moments (in the late 1960s and early 1970s) did at least a section of the student Left believe that students had the potential radically to transform society. Hence while students have played very significant roles in leading mass movements in 1989 and 2003–4, they have generally done so in cooperation with other groups and without a sense that students' political role is in any way special.

Indeed, in all our cases, repression is only one of several factors structuring students' identity and self-positioning; the education story described previously is at least as pivotal, but it interacts with these other dimensions. Students' propensity to emphasize a distinct student identity and role tends to arise in conditions of the small, elite public university, while belief in that special role tends to fade once a mass education system comes into being—and yet the nature of students' and others' claims, the effects of repression, and the relative availability of potential allies and opponents complicate the manifestation and enactment of identity claims. Which brings this conclusion to its next dimension: the nature of political regimes.

The Regime Story

The *regime story* explores how student activism aligns with different institutional patterns and phases of political development. Most of the countries included here have experienced very different regime forms over the period covered. As expected, changing regime forms have greatly influenced both the intensity and the nature of student protest. These dynamics reflect not just how liberal or authoritarian the regime is and the space it allows for association, but also the availability of other actors (to support or preempt students' political role) and the relative urgency of prevailing issues.

The general picture that emerges from the cases in this volume confirms that, as hypothesized in the introduction, student activism tends to emerge as an important factor on a national political scene in conditions in which other social and political forces are repressed. Authoritarian regimes and student protest are often entwined in a fateful embrace. Enjoying ideational and organizational advantages not available to groups such as workers, students step into the political vacuum created by a regime's repressive policies. This pattern has been seen again and again, though with great variation, in many of the profiled cases, with students emerging as leading forces to challenge authoritarian (or nondemocratic) regimes at different times in Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, China and, albeit briefly, in Hong Kong. As alluded to in the preceding discussion, this relationship also helps to explain much of the content of student movement politics. In particular, valorization of the student as the vanguard of wider struggle and as acting in the wider national interest often emerges in conditions in which mobilization by other social and political forces is repressed.

But relative authoritarianism does not tell the whole story. The countries profiled include longtime democracies (notably Japan), stable semidemocracies (Malaysia), and countries that experienced authoritarian rule for at least some period, but where even if campuses were an important site of antiregime mobilization, students did not view themselves as a leading force of political change (such as the Philippines). Clearly, the other stories observed mandate that this volume move beyond any simple measure of relative authoritarianism in untangling the effects of regime type. These cases reveal a real paradox of student mobilization: ironically, democracy may provide less fruitful a backdrop for its emergence and expression than authoritarianism. As states

considered here democratized, students have tended to yield the floor to other, now legal and open, sets of actors.

As hinted earlier, perhaps the most important dimension to consider in exploring the effects of regime type is differential levels of repression; the extent of repression matters for the issues around which students mobilize, the strategies they adopt or eschew, and the identities under which they tend to cohere. Several of the cases shed light on these dynamics. In South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, antigovernment student activists did face systematic repression—including in the Gwangju massacre of 1980—but this seeming deterrent did not forestall the development of radicalism, including students' decision to take their protest movement beyond campuses into the streets and workers' quarters. Also relevant is Burma, whose students have arguably have been subjected to the most persistent repression of all the cases, yet who mobilized regardless—like Korean students, not necessarily independently. Burmese students are certainly aware of and invoke a historical legacy of activism to motivate and legitimate continuing engagement. Moreover, students share a sense of solidarity, extending to former student activists who identify still as the 88 Generation Students' Group, that facilitates collective action. Yet at the same time, this belief in students' special role does not give rise to student separatism, as it has at times in Indonesia, China, and Taiwan: students in Burma do seek cooperation with other social groups and view their struggles as shared, even though state repression has made coordinated, open campaigns difficult.

What has distinguished politically oriented students in places such as Korea and Burma from their counterparts in Indonesia, China, and Taiwan was not a sense of moral duty and readiness to make personal sacrifice, as students in each of these countries shared those qualities. Instead, what distinguished them was the nature of the regime and specifically students' belief in the possibility of fundamental regime change: in China in 1989, students having grown up in the Maoist period were hardly able even to imagine an alternative to the party-state, whereas in both Korea and Burma, the ideal of revolutionary change was fundamental to student subculture.

Also key is the availability of other social forces. Indonesian students who chose to be politically active prior to the New Order period, for instance, mostly did so through mainstream political parties or party-affiliated mass organizations; as those avenues vanished under authoritarian rule, students, aware of their potential power and the weakness of potential allies,

grew more independent. Likewise, however open students in Burma were to alliances, other actors similarly equipped to take the lead were initially scarce; it was only in 2007 that monks (who, like students, held moral authority, but were hardly immune to state persecution) took the place of students in leading a new phase of mass protests. In Taiwan, in contrast, while national-level political divides and debates extended to the campus, prodemocracy students found a ready movement to join rather than feeling pressed to take the lead themselves. Similarly in Malaysia in the first two decades after independence, students retained clout in part because other political forces were still developing and in the absence of a strong civil society. Since the mid-1970s, however, the regime, able to rely on an increasingly elaborate array of professional politicians and bureaucrats, has left little space for dissent and has firmly pushed students outside the political sphere, even while whittling away the academic freedom and university autonomy that substantially shielded early generations of students. Students seeking regime change are thus far more likely now than previously simply to join a broader movement than form one of their own.

There as elsewhere, too, the state calibrated students' political orientations—purposefully or not—through economic pressure. In Thailand, for instance, students' own experiences in state-sponsored rural development programs fostered an orientation toward defending the poor, but these experiences also cultivated a sense of social debt toward those citizens and society; that same sort of sense of debt provided grist for the Malaysian regime to delegitimize student protest as a sign of ingratitude to the regime that made their education, with all the benefits it conveyed, possible. The Philippines offers a spin on this story: the tightening of martial law pressed increasing numbers of students toward the more marketable natural sciences than the humanities and social sciences, in turn decreasing the likelihood of students' radicalization. Similarly in China, not just repression, but also high levels of economic growth, greater regime unity, and intensified massification of the education system have combined to undercut antigovernment student activism.

All told, then, we cannot conclude that repression itself either heightens or dampens student protest in all cases; the broader circumstances—students' reading of political opportunities, the relative availability and strategies of potential allies, and the specific legacies of student activism—temper the effects of repression too much to allow for generalization. Yet one very clear trend does arise out of our cases, with the partial exception of Japan (where postwar political and economic consolidation has

rendered concern for protection for civil liberties, including academic freedom, a central student concern): democratization does indeed seem to have a radically dampening effect on student activism, or at least on the notion that students qua students constitute an important vanguard force.

The cases in this volume are littered with examples of dramatic and disillusioning declines in student activism when democratic regimes come into place. Among the most stark is Thailand: student radicalism surged after the October 1973 uprising and October 1976 massacre, but then it declined after 1977, as the regime democratized. Even as students-turned-guerillas filtered back from the jungle, there was no significant revival of student activism on the campuses. Attempts to revive discussion of the social role of the student foundered, and though there have been many major antigovernment movements, even when students have participated, they have rarely played a leading role.

The International Diffusion Story

Finally, the *international diffusion story* examines how models of political action or ideological frameworks diffuse across the region, offering students the opportunity to adopt and adapt ideas and strategies transnationally. Such borrowing at specific moments may help explain the association of particular phases of education system development and regime attributes with different collective identities and approaches, especially since socioeconomic development trajectories across the region have left states in lockstep, to a certain extent, in their pursuit of particular forms of economic growth. That said, the degree to which students drew on foreign models and influences has varied widely, being in part determined by their respective countries' relative openness to foreign influences and integration in networks of economic and cultural exchange. In this regard, Burma is once again the outlier, with its isolation for much of the period concerned having impeded transnational diffusion of motifs or repertoires of protest; countries such as Japan and the Philippines are, conversely, among the most open.

Part of what makes the possibility of international diffusion so intriguing is the evidence we find of particular ideological waves across all or part of the region, from a cold war wave, to a New Left one, and then a democratizing one. These waves do lap across countries with remarkably varying levels of economic and education system development, and with diverse regime types. Thus to the extent that the New Left wave was

a development and product of the particular social and cultural politics of advanced industrialized societies in the 1960s, it is not surprising that a New Left model of social and political organization took hold primarily in Japan among all the countries in this volume. But it did not only occur there; this wave also reached the very different shores of, for instance, Thailand, where it was a major influence, and the Philippines. And these waves intermingled in other countries, as in Korea, where a New Left wave ran together with a cold war one (including many South Korean students' respect for the Jucheist self-reliant ethos of the North), largely derived from domestic aspects of the country's geostrategic position and recent history, and then also by the 1980s with a democratizing wave.

And on a more tangible level, students in each of the cases followed and drew inspiration or motivation from particular struggles and ideas overseas. Students in the Philippines, for instance, were inspired in the 1960s–70s by Vietnamese valor and Chinese revolutionary fervor, as well as by Western counterculturalism. Malaysian students explicitly conceptualized themselves, particularly in the mid-1950s through the early 1970s, as part of an international student movement, and they shared motifs, texts, and tactics with peers abroad. Short-term study tours and international student networks facilitated such borrowing in those days, as did what later became the key vector: students pursuing degrees overseas (who, for instance, were instrumental in fomenting *dakwah* activism upon their return home in the 1980s–90s). In Japan, too, while the core issues motivating students were, on the face of it, particularly domestic in nature, the U.S.–Japan Joint Security Treaty—the main spark for activism—clearly intertwined inextricably with issues related to Japan's position vis-à-vis the Vietnam War. Moreover, students in Japan not only followed international events and ideological trends closely, but also both identified with and borrowed from student protest movements globally. In contrast, Indonesian students generally were less inclined to look abroad—yet even they have not only experienced moments of significant international influence (e.g., in 1974, when they took inspiration from the 1973 events in Thailand), but also have borrowed heavily since the 1980s from both Middle Eastern models of Islamist organization (especially the Muslim Brotherhood) and leftist models of radical student movements in the region, especially those in the Philippines and in South Korea. For their part, South Korean students, while predominantly influenced by the North Korean regime and Marxism-Leninism

more broadly, also were swayed by very different ideological currents emanating from overseas (e.g., liberation theology).

In contrast, students in Burma have been comparatively isolated and unaware of developments elsewhere; those in Taiwan have looked relatively little to international political models or trends beyond the fact of mainland China's looming political presence; and Chinese students, in turn, were cut off from international developments during the Mao years, were enamored with the West during the 1980s, and now react to global affairs primarily in the form of nationalist reactions against perceived slights against China's status and dignity. And across states, the key period of borrowing has passed: the heydays not just of student activism globally, but also specifically transnationally were, loosely, the Vietnam War years or the late 1960s to early 1970s. The widespread diminution of student protest matters not just within domestic contexts, but also in terms of models available for transmission abroad.

Concluding Remarks

However varied its precise trajectory and impacts, student activism has been highly significant at one point or another to nearly all states in East and Southeast Asia. Students have played pivotal roles in the history of the various nation-states and in the region overall. Such prevalence and persistence makes it all the more remarkable how poorly chronicled and understood this role has been. We hope this book has redressed that gap, situating and untangling students' role as political actors, both within specific countries and viewed comparatively across states.

Yet having chronicled the significance of student protests, we are confronted by an inevitable question: is the student movement a thing of the past? Was the political role of students a product of particular political and social conditions that have now passed (national independence, the emergence of nascent higher education systems, students' occupation of elite positions in societies that were highly stratified socially yet politically undeveloped, the rise of authoritarianism, democratization, and so forth)? Will student-led popular uprisings or vanguard student movements be seen again?

Such a possibility is hard to rule out in Burma, for instance, but largely because those conditions (authoritarianism, democratization, development) remain very much in the foreground. Yet even here a much wider array of oppositional forces exist; students may have ceded their primacy

enduringly to monks, nascent political parties (in Burma's new foray into electoral authoritarianism), or others. Or perhaps China will see a resurgence of student protest, for the same reason of likely political flux, but the current state of affairs on Chinese campuses offers little indication of such likelihood.

Indeed overall, the cases in this book point to powerful forces that work against the revival of massive or pivotal student movements: the transformation of education systems, the spread of democracy, and the fading of international models. These three trends, themselves embodied in the fading in most of the countries of the image of the student as a rebel, suggest that student politics are entering new chapters across Asia—chapters that differ from state to state, but still may share common tropes and devices.

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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

POLITICAL SCIENCE/ASIAN STUDIES

Since World War II, students in East and Southeast Asia have led protest movements that toppled authoritarian regimes in countries such as Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand. Elsewhere in the region, student protests have shaken regimes until they were brutally suppressed—most famously in China's Tiananmen Square and in Burma. But despite their significance, these movements have received only a fraction of the notice that has been given to American and European student protests of the 1960s and 1970s. The first book to redress this neglect, *Student Activism in Asia* tells the story of student protest movements across Asia.

Taking an interdisciplinary, comparative approach, the contributors examine ten countries, focusing on those where student protests have been particularly fierce and consequential: China, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. They explore similarities and differences among student movements in these countries, paying special attention to the influence of four factors: higher education systems, students' collective identities, students' relationships with ruling regimes, and transnational flows of activist ideas and inspirations.

The authors are leading specialists on student activism in each of the countries investigated. Together, these experts provide a comprehensive picture of an important tradition of political protest that has left indelible marks on Asia's sociopolitical landscape.

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